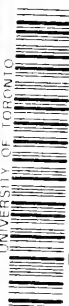
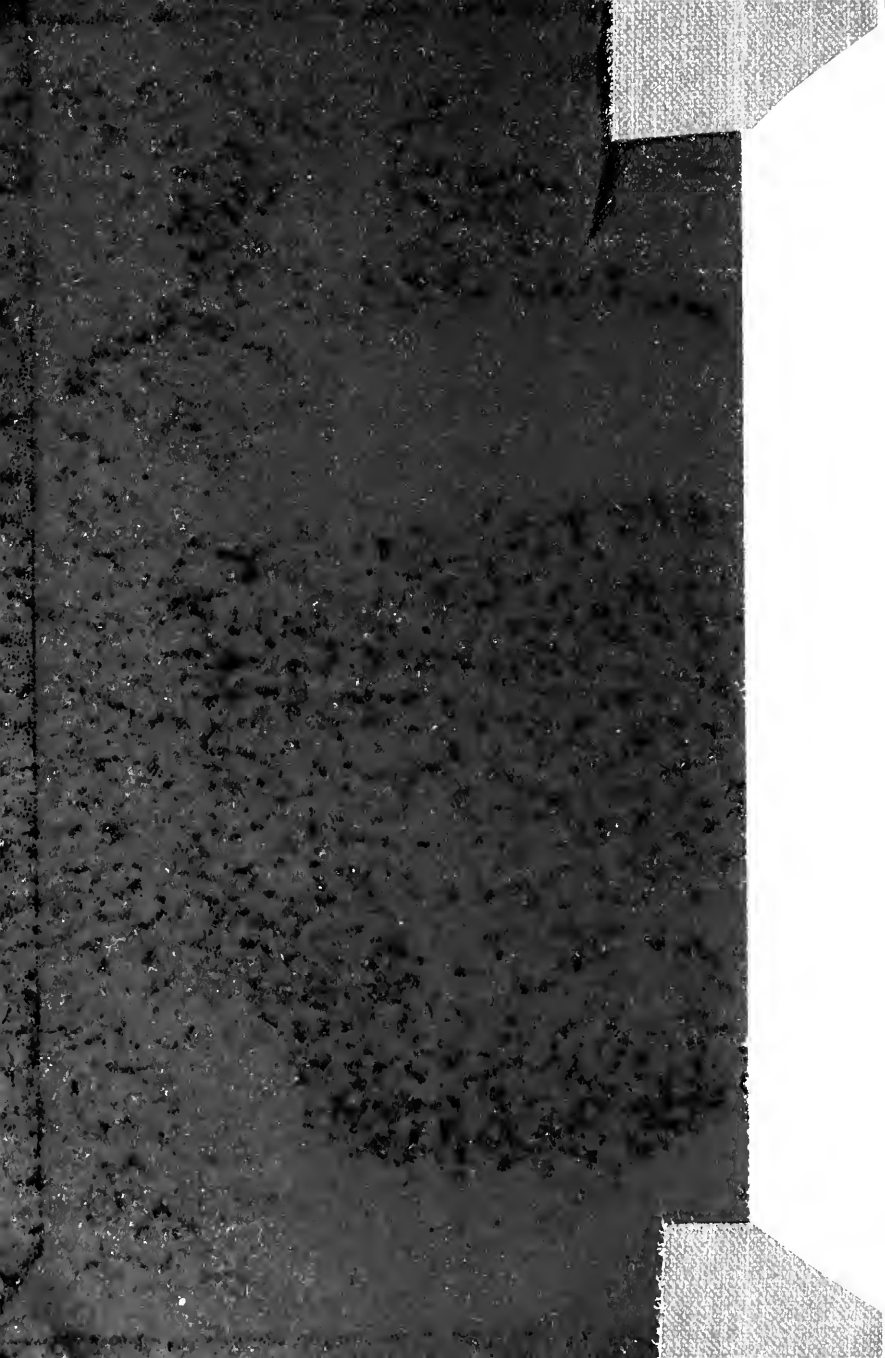


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PROFESSOR SAINTSBURY

VIII.

THE AUGUSTAN AGES

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THE AUGUSTAN AGES

BY

OLIVER ELTON

LECTURER ON ENGLISH LITERATURE AT THE OWEN COLLEGE,
MANCHESTER

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PREFACE.

THE disabilities of a short essay like this are confessed in its aim, which is to review more than one literature of Western Europe during a period that opens in the third quarter of the seventeenth century. The later limit varies in different cases. In France it is the death of Louis XIV.; in England the story goes further with Pope and Swift, but is guided rather by schools and fashions than by strict chronology, which may be misleading. As for some other countries, which fought the same battles as France and England, only many years in their wake, I have tried to pack, into what must be regarded as an appendix, the beginnings of the great change, mental and formal, that overtook them also. This latter part has been purposely written on a rather more compressed scale. It was impracticable to go too far into the eighteenth century; and it may be added, with no wish to put off criticism, that the fitting of the countries, groups, and authors into this part of the series has been, as usual, carefully considered, and can be judged fairly when the companion volumes appear.

The literature of prose and thought has preceded in each case, without any ambition to outline the course of pure philosophy. For in this period, while poetry declined, nothing less than criticism began to be organised, as well as prose in its newer cast. The history of style by itself would have no sense, without some remark on the shapes that the intellectual and rational movement took in letters. "*Les idées seules,*" says Buffon, "*forment le fond du style.*" France formed her prose soonest; her writing was on the whole more noble and influential than that of any other land at the time; and therefore France has been put first, although England did more for science, and perhaps ultimately more for thought. The two great countries fill three-quarters of this volume, and the sway of the French and English models upon other nations occupies much of the sequel. Hence it is hoped that, however the workmanship comes short, the general design may be right, and the emphasis.

Everyone who would labour honestly over such a span of history must compromise in some clear way with his own ignorance, or the apologies for the task become too difficult. The bibliography of a few decades—such as Clavell's list, in 500 folio pages, of the English books printed between 1660 and 1693—is enough to damp the freshest vanity. Much of the work cannot be done minutely, and many a portion has been better summed already. But the errors of an Englishman judging Racine or Bossuet, like the felicities of a Frenchman judging Milton or Wordsworth, are instructive, and in any case will not show

mere submission to the native estimates, however brilliant. Yet the real justification is rather that the *grand siècle*, though much spoken of, is not too well known in England even to well-equipped readers, and that a sweeping view may still be of use. The same warrant holds yet more fully for the experiment in the seventh and eighth chapters. Holberg, and Filicaia, and *Simplicissimus* are apt to be shadows of names to us, and the question is only, What is the fairest method of presenting them? Often have I wished for better store of the "literary" or "reading knowledge" which has had to serve, especially in the outlying tongues.

It may not be intrusive to say that, apart from French and English, the chief work has been done at the section on the Germanic literatures, with the exception of the Dutch—a language which has only been used with difficulty and labour. For that, as for the Spanish, the historians have been much relied on, and the story has also been cut short; which may be excused, as these literatures enter least of any into the present period. I have not been able to read any of the Portuguese writing of the time, which is also admittedly of lesser rank; and, but for being indebted to a skilled Portuguese scholar, Mr Edgar Prestage, M.A., for a revision, should hardly have inserted the few lines on the subject. Eastern Europe has not been touched. In general, wherever the originals have not been available, the rule has been kept of going back to the better native histories of literature; and indeed the obligation to these is throughout

too large and indefinite to acknowledge from point to point. But where they are not cited, in most cases all specific description, praise, or dispraise has to be taken as at first-hand. In this measure the survey is put forward as original. Nor has the period yet been described with just the same scope and purposes. Partly to mark the trail for any curious reader, a fair allowance of bibliography has been given in the notes, and very little of it on hearsay. Much has been taken out unwillingly that it would have been a pleasure to set forth; and, on the other hand, everything, in so wide a map, is very liable to expert amendment. For, apart from the ordinary certainty of errors, all has been done in England, and in great part away from the national library. But the book is much in debt to the acquisitions of the Owens College Library and the London Library: the authorities in either case have not spared their aid. Thanks are also offered to various friends and colleagues; and not least to Professor Robert Adamson, LL.D., of Glasgow University, who has seen part of the sheets and has given encouragement to the venture. The helpers have in no way to answer for the flaws. Lastly, whatever worth there may be in this brief chronicle of a great literary age, I would like to dedicate, though time has run by, to those teachers who gave the author inspiration of old in the Oxford courses of classics and philosophy.

MANCHESTER, *June* 1899.

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THE show of unity and concert, if one may use the word, that the classical French literature presents, is

greater than in the literature of Augustan Rome, or the precursors of Dante, or the Elizabethan poets, or the English romantics. It is not an illusion due to the line of skilful and distinguished chroniclers from Voltaire onwards.¹ Neither is it prejudiced by the inward oppositions of which the record is full. The Cartesian and Jansenist disputes, the Quietist dispute, Bossuet pitted against Molière on one side and Fénelon on the other, Male-

¹ The following histories claim recommendation, and the free acknowledgments of the present sketch: (1) *English*: G. Saintsbury, *A Short History of French Literature*, enlarged ed., 1898 (with parallel vol. of extracts). E. Dowden, *A History of Fr. Lit.*, 1897. (2) Ferdinand Lotheissen's *Geschichte der französischen Literatur im xviii. Jahrhundert*, Vienna, 2 vols., 2nd. ed., 1897, the best elaborate book on its period by any one man. (3) *French*: Désiré Nisard's *Histoire de la Litt. fr.*, 1844, &c., is a study, by a master, of the ideas of classicism. F. Brunetière's many essays and his articles in the *Grande Encyclopédie*: and his *Manuel*, with bibliography (1898, and Eng. trans.), are indispensable. The *Histoire générale de la Litt. fr.* (vols. iv. to vi.), by many hands, referred to *post* as "Petit de Julleville," after its general editor, is equally so. Of short histories, Eugène Lintilhac's *Précis historique et critique de la Litt. fr.* (2 vols., 2nd. ed., 1895); and Gustave Lanson's *Histoire*, &c. (1895), are admirable, and very cheap. Bibliographies are in Petit de Julleville and Lintilhac. Emile Faguet, (*xviii^e Siècle*) *Etudes littéraires*, 11th ed., 1893, and Jules Lemaitre, *Impressions de Théâtre*, &c., are too well known to specify again; likewise Sainte-Beuve, Lessing, and others of the older judges. (4) The series called the *Grands Ecrivains de la France* (named *post* as "*G. E. F.*") is authoritative, and includes the whole of Molière, Racine, La Bruyère, La Fontaine, and Mme. de Sévigné, with lives and lexica. These, and the two series of short critical monographs, *Les Grands Ecrivains français* (Hachette), and in the *Classiques populaires* (Lecène et Oudin) by various hands, which are often excellent, may be named here once for all. French works named in footnotes are published in Paris, and English ones in London, unless otherwise stated.

branch against Arnauld, Bayle and Boileau against different multitudes, the "ancients" against the "moderns,"—none of these schisms prevent that great generation, when viewed afar off, from seeming to sink its differences and to march like a conquering army, in the pride of its discipline, covering Europe with its colonies. Our age of Dryden is full of confusion and transitions, and has no concert. Our age of Pope, besides being so brief, is lacking in dignity of posture; it is soon re-invaded with confusions, and its best literature does not express the essence, but only an incident, of the English mind. French classicism expresses qualities that are not the very highest, but are primary and indestructible, in the French mind. So that there is no sign of Frenchmen ever ceasing to arise who will go back to their classical age and repose upon it. For the same reason, though its European primacy is long over, it can never fail to hold out for achievement certain literary ideals that are next to supreme.

Form is the achievement of this literature; form, of structure and of style, that is perfect under the lesser law of definition before the intelligence, if *Classicism as a touchstone.* not often under the higher law of free genius and beauty. The Greeks and Dante go beyond classicism on its own lines, by virtue of a greater and more organic power of construction, a style profounder and equally infallible, and a weightier body of thought. But there are other literatures which cannot well be said to triumph through obedience to any law, whether higher or lower, at all. The romantic poetry of Shelley, or of Victor Hugo, moves in a world of

expression as well as feeling to which classicism is deaf, and which arose out of its ashes. Our Elizabethan poets moved in a like world, out of whose ashes arose classicism in England. But classicism can be confronted, not only without shame, but to its eternal honour, with even these literatures, which are so much greater than classicism in their message to the world. Shelley and Victor Hugo—nay, Spenser and Shakespeare—are not surer masters of artistic construction than Bossuet and Racine; they are often less sure; and they often master their style less steadily and completely. They often subsist, in spite of scheme or style, by their volume of poetic energy. It is not that they fall short because they covet something higher than classicism covets; it is that their shaping instinct often fails them altogether. And if, when we are under the spell of poetic energy, and are being swept away by it, the Greeks and Dante are the highest correctives to our judgment, French classicism is only less of a corrective to it.

Classicism is and always must be a beacon of this kind, because, as its name implies, it drew inspiration, powerful if limited, from the ancient *Antiquity: Greek and Latin* writings. Antiquity thus fertilised modern letters for the third time. The first time was in the twelfth century, when the romantic matter and its literary moulds were forming and were strongly affected by the antique so far as it was known to the middle ages. The second time was after the revival of learning. Next, in the later seventeenth century, the French genius set the example of rejecting the

indiscriminate snatch at antiquity that had marked the revival of learning, and took to itself as much of the ancient art and style as it could at the moment truly absorb. By this restriction it escaped the failure that had attended, in the day of Ronsard, a wilder ambition. It is often said that French classicism means Latinism; but the slackening, during the *grand siècle*, of Hellenism as a literary influence, though undeniable, must never be overstated. Greek learning and taste told deeply on Huet; Richard Simon, one of the fathers of rational scholarship, was erudite in Greek; the work of the Daciers at Homer and the Stoics had its effect on educated taste. Aristotle supplied more than a convention to the literary critics, and Longinus an inspiration through Boileau's rendering. By no far circuit Plato offered a literary form and many delicate graces to Malebranche and Fénelon, and Sophocles and Euripides (not Æschylus) must count for something durable in the plays of Racine. La Bruyère went back to the original form of Theophrastian "character," and re-created it in his own way.¹ The truth was that classicism became so perfect on its own lines that it instinctively reached out to something higher. But the check of the operation of the Hellenic spirit is seen in what may be strictly called the conceit of classicism, its pride in its own perfections, which it shows when it cannot see that it falls short of the ancients. In the dispute between

¹ The matter cannot be laboured here; but see E. Egger, *L'Hellénisme en France*, Paris, 1869; a work still illuminating, though not very clear in its proportions or conclusions.

the "ancients and moderns," to be sketched on a later page, the whole of this issue is involved. Still, in the main, classicism, in its relation with the antique, does mean Latinism; it means Cicero working on the preachers, Plautus and Terence on the comedians, Horace on Boileau, Virgil on Fénelon, Tacitus on the makers of memoirs. These authors play on the French genius and help to call out its constructive powers and its style. It is true that similar influences were active in England about the same time. But our greatest writers, like Dryden and Swift, are ever ill at ease in the confines of Latinism, and full of some poetical or imaginative matter that it does not fully help them to express. French classicism, partly through finding a natural affinity in the Latin mind, was more thoroughgoing, and spread farther than English, and lasted longer. And, as will be seen, Latin itself paid for this power that it exerted upon French, by giving gradual way before it from the place of the universal language.

It will be seen in later chapters how the prestige and conquests of the "great reign," as well as its achievements in art, began to spread the
The kings and literature. empire of French over the map. But classicism itself was deeply shapen by the social rule under which it grew. The literary influence of the French king has never been ignored. Charles II. also had a taste for lucidity and good reasoning and sermons, for wit and epigram and theatrical shows, and he was the fountain, if a fitful and unwholesome one, of patronage. But Louis XIV. had his weight of will,

he had his dignity of style—latterly a little ossified, but undeniable in his prime—and he was the embodiment of the most despotic of all social governments working directly upon letters. There was really something universal and classic about his expression of his orders; neither his selfish licence nor his pietistic reaction ever really went to his brain or prejudiced his sound if somewhat oppressive taste. The authors treated in this chapter are chosen much more by types than by strict dates, and consist mainly of those who fell more or less fully under the social rule inaugurated by Louis's assumption of power in 1661. That assumption coincides broadly with the departure of the larger, bitterer, and more virile stamp of writer formed during the day of Richelieu or the Fronde or in the first freshness of the great theological feuds. Thus the *Memoirs* of Retz, put together after 1671, like the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld (1665), and like the plays of Corneille (though he is found writing as late as 1674), are not really of the reign. Pascal died in 1662, though his *Pensées* did not come out till 1670, and his *Lettres Provinciales* (1656-57) close a long battle. Molière himself, who died in 1673, and inhaled so much of the air of the *siècle*, was half formed before it, and is too free of spirit and too buoyant to be in affinity to its deepest traits. On the other hand, Saint-Simon, the commentator on the whole pageant after it was over, is a late reversion to the earlier and more audacious types of mind and style. Those qualities of classicism, its exquisite tempered elegance and rightness (*justesse*), its breeding and finish, which the king and court were

so powerful to evoke, one must doubtless be a Frenchman to taste completely. One need only be an Englishman to go backwards or onwards, not without relief, to the greater magnificence and initiative of Corneille or of Saint-Simon, or to fix at once on the survival of those qualities, through the heart of the reign, in Bossuet.

But the subtlest leaven of classicism was neither Latin letters nor the social atmosphere; it was the *Cartesianism* rational spirit in the shape inherited from *and literature.* Descartes, who died in 1650, and whose *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) is in so many ways prophetic. It will be seen how this spirit was arrested in its workings on the higher philosophy; but its colouring of society and literature, or the correspondences that it finds already present in them, are none the less distinct for being, as M. Brunetière has shown, somewhat delayed.¹ It is only what we should surmise, that in England the pressure upon letters should come from the side of physical science, with its needs of accumulation and induction, and its Royal Society;² while in France there should be much more play of

¹ *Manuel*, p. 141. M. Brunetière is ill to differ with on such a question; but he brings scant evidence for his opinion that Molière, Boileau, and Bossuet were all decisively formed by reading *Les Provinciales*. On the other hand, the Cartesian spirit leaves its distinct traces on the last two. For a modified view see Lintilhac, *Précis*, ii. 21.

² The Académie des Sciences was founded, it is true, in 1666; but its scope was far narrower than that of the Royal Society: it owed something to its foreign *savants*, and its prosperity did not begin till much later. See s.v. "Académies" in *Grande Encyclopédie*; J. Bertrand, *L'Académie des Sciences de 1666 à 1793* (1869); E. Maindron, *Les Fondations de Prix à l'Acad. des Sciences, 1714-1780* (1881); also Brunetière, *Manuel*, pp. 234-236.

abstract principle, and much more formulation. This contrast need not be embarrassed by the interchange of mental influences between the two lands. Certainly Dryden and his countrymen have some of the Cartesian traits, such as the spirit of logic and order; but that spirit had long been everywhere, and the immediate influence of its formulator Descartes upon English thought was scanty. The Cartesian philosophy, as distinct from its method, does not work upon the Cambridge divines or even Locke in such a way as to affect letters generally. In France, there are three main correspondences (besides one which we reserve, see p. 29) between the tone of literature and the Cartesian principles, and it is unsafe to define where correspondence implies direct influence.

1. Every proposition must satisfy the rigours of the intelligence: it is also enough that it should do so.

Definition. Truth is reached by clearing the mind of presumptions, and advancing through a chain of ideas that approve themselves as clear, distinct, and valid. This programme, which summarises part of the *Discours*, makes readily for logic in composition and lucidity in detail; which are ruling traits of classicism. For these rigours come to press their claim not only on the matters that are the monopoly of the intelligence, but on poetry and eloquence; and here too must be satisfied, whatever be the pitch of feeling, whatever the desire for inwardness and for escape from the rule of logic. Bourdaloue evolving a sermon, Malebranche a chapter, La Fontaine a fable, or Bussy the relation of an intrigue, all look to firmness in the ligaments, wholeness of the impression, and

clearness in the items: they look, in a word, if one word there be, to *definition*. Definition—which is something between beauty and mere geometrical or mechanical arrangement—is the *summum bonum*; and the tribunal is the pure intelligence, not the imagination and its shaping spirit, not the higher law. Malebranche, the “French Plato,” has a passage odder than anything that Plato himself says about poetry. He not only forbids reason ever to be perturbed by the fancy (*Recherche de la Vérité*, bk. ii. pt. iii.), but he expressly reduces beauty to a kind of geometrical order. His own illustration is the ugliness of the tortuous streets of old cities, compared with the charm of a neat geometrical pattern; he would have preferred New York to Nuremberg. All this answers to the Cartesian love of the deductive or geometrical method, and of a rigid orderly development. No great French writer of the time is without these instincts.

2. Logic, lucidity, and definition all make for the type of expression that is universally valid and understood. Truth, it would appear, is a thing *The abstract and universal* that the average mind can reach, or at least receive, if only it is sufficiently rational. There is no preserve-ground in truth; nothing depends on temperament, prejudice, passion, or personal bent. And the style which answers to this conception is such as to be current coin for all the great king’s subjects, with no mysteries or ciphers in the inscription. All this is essentially the Cartesian attitude, and something like it is actually the character of the classical writers, who circulate far and wide in translation or

in their originals. It is easy to see the gain and the sacrifice; the gain of scope and the sure acceptance by the vast public, as well as the sacrifice of the personal, autobiographical tone, whether it be in lyric or in prose like that of Montaigne.

3. Lastly, Cartesian theory tallies with the inclination of classicism to thrust the whole natural, non-human world, out of art. Man, or the soul that thinks, is on the right side of a great gulf, over which there is no bridge. On the other side is the whole kingdom of matter, which can be analysed into modifications of space, and which includes everything that is not man. We are severed from the earth and the brutes out of which we spring, from "our brother the ass." The famous Cartesian theorem that animals are "machines" without feeling—nearer to dead matter than to men—has a literature of its own. But the view, if not dogmatically held, is in consonance with the whole classical position that "the proper study of mankind is man." La Fontaine, who has more direct vision of the earth and of living creatures than any one of his time, again and again repudiates the fantasy of automatism. Like our naturalist Ray, he knew the truth too well; and in a charming and well-known sally, he proposes for the beasts a kind of imperfect soul, not equal to ours, not capable of chains of reasoning, but able to feel and in a measure to judge; a soul drawn from a very subtilised matter, "a distilment of light, livelier and quicker than flame." Many other writers resent the mechanical theory of animals. But La Fontaine, as

will be seen, is the greatest exception to that divorce of the literary class from outward nature, which meets us on either side of the Channel. This divorce is much less evident in France, where the preceding age was not highly poetical, than in England, where it was. But in both lands, though in France chiefly, the Cartesian formulæ loosely fit and illuminate the mundane, urban, gregarious character imprinted upon literature. The assemblage of the writing class in London or Paris made for the same restrictions; for man must be alone with Nature if he is not to lose her. And, in another less definable way, the Cartesian attitude extends to the manner in which man himself is judged; judged, that is, by analysis, method, lucid decomposition of character into its elements. The rule of "clearness and distinctness," says La Bruyère, is "assez belle et assez juste pour devoir s'étendre au jugement que l'on fait des personnes." This answers to that lucid lack of mystery in presenting character, even complex character, which was to be a bequest of classicism to Voltaire and the *philosophes*.¹

French classicism, therefore, much more than English, has its roots—or at least its formulation—in philosophy laid bare. And still it remains
Rationalism is stayed. no paradox that the movement of classicism in France is chiefly *literary*, while in England it is chiefly *intellectual*. In England, after all, the main affair was to advance the rational spirit; in

¹ See E. Krantz, *L'Esthétique de Descartes*, Paris, 1882, for a close and original scrutiny of this whole matter.

the doing of this a literature of power and interest sprang up; the progress from Hobbes through Locke is on the great lines of speculation; nay, the centre of European thought is more steadily fixed in England than elsewhere, though it may pause now in Holland with Spinoza, or in Germany with Leibniz. But between Descartes and Bayle the philosophical centre is not in France. For Cartesianism was arrested in France as a philosophy, while it struck wider and deeper into society and letters than elsewhere. Rationalism and philosophy at large stand marking time in France for half a century, though they beat up much dust in doing so.

The more direct of the decocters and opponents of Descartes, whether in France or in Holland (where the battle was fought earlier), are numerous, but do not much concern us; their thought is not original, and their form is seldom notable.¹ They act as middlemen between philosophy and lettered society. Such are the Cartesians Géraud de Cordemoy (1662), and Sylvain Régis, whose *Système de Philosophie* (1690) is a complete course of logic, metaphysics, physics, and morals, ostensibly starting from philosophic doubt, and built up by "clear and distinct" stages. Such, on the opposition side, is Bishop Huet, who will be

¹ Bouillier's *Histoire de la Philosophie cartésienne*, Paris, 1854 and 1868, 2 vols., is still the fullest summary of these forgotten wars; and add of course the articles on *Descartes* and his school in Petit de Julleville, vol. iv., as well as those in the histories of philosophy; and art. "Cartésianisme" by Ch. Adam in *Grande Encyclopédie*, for history of the civil and papal prohibitions of the doctrine. Geulinx (died 1669) must be omitted here.

noticed below. His *Censura*, however, appeared when the issue was no longer between the pure Cartesians and their scholastic opponents. Very soon the debate had become embarrassed in the great quarrel between the Jesuits, who held to the official creed of Aquinas, and the Jansenists, whose headquarters, the cloistered retreat of Port-Royal, so deeply coloured and ennobled all French thought.¹ The earlier phases of this debate, turning partly on the question of nature and grace, and partly on the ethical finesse of the Jesuits, had been closed by the decisive *Provinciales* of Pascal (1656-57). The attendant literature falls before our scope, and the next entrance of philosophy into the higher walks of letters may be dated 1674-75, when the treatise of Nicolas Malebranche, *De la Recherche de la Vérité*, was published. This great effort to edit Descartes in the service of faith through the mediation of Platonic conceptions, and the resistance that it met with from other theologians, fill the remainder of the century, and lead up directly to the sceptical solvent administered by Bayle.

Malebranche (1638-1715), a priest of the Oratory, with its traditions at once humanist and austere, is the French analogue to our Cambridge divines; but he is a greater writer than

¹ The play of Jansenism on French literature and character has been realised ever since the famous *Port-Royal* (1830-60), the most congenial and perfect of Sainte-Beuve's writings. His judgments and presentiments of the Jansenists have not been seriously qualified. In this chapter the attempt to summarise that potent influence is renounced, partly because its origins fall to an earlier volume of the series.

any of them, and he is more significant in his thought than them all. The French still call him their Plato, and he has, besides his gracious and sinuous style, some of that insuppressible subtlety of intellect that goes with the true Platonist in his farthest excursions of fancy. Also, in the *Méditations chrétiennes* (1683) and in the *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique* (1688) he has the mystical unction, if not of Plato, at least of his English Christianisers like John Smith and Henry More. But Malebranche accepts the modern spirit far more frankly than they do: it is the very frankness with which he accepts it, and lets it play upon his theology and his Platonism, that makes his thought so significant. It was his convinced, thorough-going enthusiasm that awakened the prescient, scared the official orthodox, and advanced philosophy far more by the clear revelation of what was impossible than by any success in the attempt itself. Malebranche hovers between two poles of thought, which he is ever trying, for as much as his life is worth, to bring closer. By temperament and meditation he starts from a *vision*, from something that is poetry, that can only be expressed in emotional or figured terms, but which he insists on stating philosophically: the "vision of all things in God." God is not merely a maker of a world naïvely taken to exist by itself, nor yet the detached watcher of the human struggle, nor again a Mind that serves to give permanence to phenomena in the gaps of human consciousness. The God of Malebranche is the actual and ever-operant mode of communication between mind and

matter (or thought and space) which Descartes had left practically severed by a gulf. God is the source, almost the sphere, certainly the condition, of all the ideas which the thinking subject has of matter. The exposition of this theory (*Recherche*, book iii. pt. ii. ch. vi., vii.) is as subtle a piece of dialectic as the Latin genius has achieved after Pascal. Yet the piquancy lies in the contrast between this conclusion and the starting-point. Malebranche accepts implicitly the rational method of Descartes: indeed he applies the acid of doubt much more fully in many ways than his master. He forges a chain joining the extremes of universal doubt and the "vision in God." This he does by a series of very subtle shiftings between poetical and logical transitions. The great work, *De la Recherche de la Vérité*, which attempts this reasoning, is in plan an exhaustive psychology of error, leading up to counsels for the conduct of the understanding in its mission after truth. The senses, the imagination, the intelligence, the inclinations, the passions—each is defined by Malebranche with strange shades of his own—are analysed from the side of their fallibility. There is everything in the book, geometry, science, metaphysic, eloquence; and there are a mundane observant wit and sudden torpedo-like irony that remind us of Bossuet. Malebranche extends the form of the "character," which La Bruyère pinned on to special names, to mental types,—the false savant, the vain man, the effeminate man; and he gives a whole chapter of dissection to Montaigne, the general enemy of the religious. The chief supplements to

this great treatise are the curious *Traité de Morale* (1684) (which should be compared with Descartes' *Traité des Passions*) and the *Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce* (1680), where the same kind of method is applied, though with less real brilliance, to the central matters of theology. Malebranche's other works are mostly defences or expansions, sometimes in devotional form, sometimes in dialogue, of his radical ideas.

The form of Malebranche, which gives him his primacy amongst philosophical French writers, is a perfect harmony of opposites, which on their intellectual side are really past reconciling. His vision and his tide of rapt devotion, his reference of all things and thoughts to a central fountain of light and warmth that bathes them, give him his glow and ease, and wing his ample and beautiful rhythms,—perhaps the most poetical in French before Rousseau, yet never, like those of another prose Platonist, Giordano Bruno, foaming over with a tide of unmastered emotion. New and unsurmised powers are shapen for philosophical French. At the same time, he is a Cartesian in his spirit of orderly and almost geometrical conduct, in his logic and clearness and incessant appeal to the intellect. Hence his style, though not pronounced ideally correct, is intensely luminous, and by its beauty carries off much dubious matter. The general effect of Malebranche¹ was to provoke philosophical

¹ *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Genoude et Lourdoueix, 2 vols., 1837; and the chief of them, ed. Jules Simon, 1842 (2 vols.) and 1859. See, besides Bouillier, the section on *Malebranche*, under the chapter on

thought forward in a direction counter to his wish. He had scholars in France, decoctors (like Norris) and early translators in England; but his style and skill only served at last to widen the fissure between his conclusions and his method. He had tried to show that faith, interpreted in his Platonising way, not only could sustain the Cartesian dialectic, but grew out of it. But the first result of his effort was the keen-scented protest of fellow-theologians, while the second was the scepticism of Bayle. The heat of opposition came not so much from the old-fashioned scholastics as from the orthodox Cartesians themselves, who by now included most of the more powerful divines. Bossuet parted company with Malebranche, fulminated against him, and inspired Fénelon to write a refutation of his *Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce*. This skirmish was only shelved by the Quietist debate and Bossuet's own rupture with Fénelon. But from Port-Royal, the fortress of the Cartesian Jansenists, the assault was sounded.

The debate that now arose wavers on strange frontier-lands between psychology and theology, and engendered many tomes that are not *Cross-firing* *in divinity*, unduly forgotten. The weightiest of the stricter Cartesians was "the great Arnauld," Antoine Arnauld¹ (1612-1694), the incarnation of a rational,

Descartes, by A. Hannequin and R. Thamin, in Petit de Julleville's *Histoire*, &c., vol. iv. Also Brunetière, *Études critiques*, vols. iii. and iv.; and L. Ollé-Laprune, *La Philosophie de Malebranche*, 1870; and *s.v.* "Occasionalism" in the histories of Philosophy.

¹ *Œuvres*, 50 vols., 1775, &c.

serried, noble-spirited theologian, who can reason much better than he can write, but who writes enormously; the last and most powerful voice of a great family of founders and combatants. Arnauld, long since scored with his wars against Jesuits and Protestants, would have none of the new perilous *concordat* between faith and reason. A formidable fray was opened in 1683 with his treatise *Des vraies et des fausses Idées*, and drifted into an endless exchange of letters and replications. The "vision in God" was misprized as a reflection on the detachment and majesty of God himself, and as leading to pantheism. The assumption that God wrought only by "general ways" (*voies générales*), which to Malebranche absolved God from the irregularities and thwart courses of the world, was scented with suspicion as telling against miracle and special providence. "Intelligible space" and other abstruse assumptions were stamped as figments. The Jansenists suspected Malebranche of tampering with their central theorems, in which they would not allow that they came too near the Calvinists, namely, that man is impotent to have a voice in his own salvation, and that the sin of Adam was necessary. In short, almost every speculative issue of the time was raised. The Platonist of the Oratory, the greatest philosophical pen of France, had endangered faith by trying to extend to it the calculus of reason. This schism among the Cartesians only added to the perplexity and cross-firing, a precise account of which must be left to those competent to write the history of theology. But a literary chronicle

may pass from artist to artist, noting perhaps how thought has shifted in the interval.

Amongst the subaltern moralists and disputants Pierre Nicole (1625-1695) was ranked very high; this was one of the indulgences of classicism to the lucid and orderly second-rate. But Nicole, most of whose works are now wreckage, has some worth and a significant history. As the ally and theorist of militant Jansenism he aided Arnauld in the famed Port-Royal Logic¹ (*L'Art de Penser*, 1662), which is a popular adjustment of the austere attitude of the school to Cartesian principle. He had already put all the *Provinciales* into Latin for foreign readers. He had uncommon scholarship and debating subtlety, which he displayed in a mass of treatises, chiefly against Protestantism, that need never be collected. Still, in his life of singular shifts and aliases, he managed, despite an absorbent and impressionable mind, to run a course of his own. *Les Imaginaires* and *Les Visionnaires* (1664-67) are letters—in form studio copies of Pascal's—tending to show that the conclusions charged on Jansenism are a pure bogey of its clerical enemies. This, to Nicole's associates, was disproving too much. He also flung out, in the character of an austere censor, against the corrupting effects of the comic drama and of innocent amusement generally. In Nicole can be read some

¹ Translated and annotated by T. S. Baynes, 1872. The rest of Nicole has been little reprinted, except for his *Pensées*, which are sometimes bound up with Pascal's; and his works were never fully collected.

of the insanest ascetical rhetoric ever vented by an apostle of reason. His account of a ball as “un massacre horrible d’âmes qui s’entre-tuent les uns les autres” is unworthy of a Frenchman and a gentleman. He had no humour, and wrote a whole chapter on the “means of profiting by bad sermons.” Still he has at his best a serious dignity, which raises him into style and force. His *Essais de Morale*, which began to appear in 1671, are on high subjects—the rights and frailties of greatness, the weak fearfulness of mankind,—which may sometimes (as is also true of Addison) find him out; but often we can almost understand Mme. de Sévigné reading him again and again. The best of the *Essais* are the *Traité* called *Moyens de conserver la Paix avec des Hommes*, and the *Traité de la Grandeur*. Here he sometimes recalls the solemnity of Pascal, but, as Joubert said, not his style. He is a bridge between the polemical theologians and the makers of maxim. He was popular in England, for of the *Essais* there was a translation “by a Person of Quality,” of which two editions were printed by 1696.

We may catch the contemporary thrill and zest, passing into satiety, by following these wars as they suffer the scrutiny of Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), who rehearses some of the career of Gibbon. After a youthful sally into Romanism, he returned ostensibly to his Protestant rearing, but really to a detached point of view, which he preached and screened with matchless if often shifty dexterity. Like Gibbon he laid up a vast and orderly learning

Bayle.

which was ever at hand; and he can, like Gibbon, abstract a speculative theorem with the keenest precision, isolated from its emotional source or effect. Though he has more inward fire than our historian, he puts the same restraint, if with less pose, on his pervading irony. Both writers can be taxed with an unhappy cold complaisance—at times part of a policy—for the scabrous matter of history or myth. But Bayle never bent himself on a single work that should be masterly in its form, and his writing is lavish and scattered. After many journeys, mental as well as bodily, he found himself in Rotterdam, a State-endowed professor of philosophy, and opened fire in 1682 with a strange, trailing, unsigned work, a *Letter* on the comet of 1680. His drift is to question the penal or prophetic character of meteors, to qualify the horrors of atheism by contrast with those of pagan idolatry, and to plead for the reality of the noble and virtuous sceptic. The insinuation was seized at once; Bayle meant that morals were not staked upon doctrine at all, and could well survive it. How much later polemic may here be studied in its very sources! He went on with a plea for universal tolerance of opinions. This appeared in his *Critique générale* of Maimbourg's hostile *Histoire du Calvinisme*, and he now proved altogether too much for his Protestant friends. The fray thickened when Bayle spent the fulness of his eloquence and pungent scorn in two pamphlets¹ (1686) inspired by the Revo-

¹ (1) *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique sous le Règne de Louis le Grand.* (2) *Commentaire philosophique sur le "compelle in-*

cation of the Edict of Nantes. He made none of the Lockian reservations against atheists or catholics, and he faced with pleasure the fire of the bigots on all hands. His passages with the savage Protestant disputant Jurieu (see p. 57 below) ended in his being driven from his chair for heterodoxy. Nor had he meanwhile mended his case by his single-handed venture, the first of genuine monthly reviews, *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (1684-86). Each number is a series of summaries and judgments at length, together with shorter bulletins on works of erudition, history, and especially theology. The

First works ; exchange of volleys between Malebranche
learned reviews. and Arnauld can be well surveyed from this vantage-ground. The manner is studiously impersonal, but is suffused with a certain—still hesitating—ironic light. The effete learning, for instance, in the odd *Atlant* of Olof Rudbeck, the Swede (see our seventh chapter), was taken very seriously by the time; Bayle analyses it at length, and dismisses it with the compliment, "If the author could do this, what would he not do if he had worked at his books of medicine?" Once he inserts a little defence, against the charge of libertinism, of Malebranche's suspect theory that all pleasure is—for the moment—a real

trure." The *avis aux Réfugiés* (1690) (a violent attack on the Protestants by a supposed Catholic), whose authorship and motive are much disputed, is not quite like Bayle's ordinary style; but what other living man could or would have written it? See Sayous, *Histoire de la Litt. française à l'Etranger*, ed. 1853, vol. i. p. 305, and Brunetière's classical articles on Bayle, *Etudes critiques*, series v. p. 120. Also Picavet in *Grande Encycl.*, s.v. "Bayle."

present good; and he infers, disconcertingly, that "Dieu a uni le bien et le bonheur avec le péché pour un certain temps." But all these sallies, and the countless *comptes rendus* that Bayle poured out in his review, only helped him to range the batteries for his *Dictionnaire historique et critique*. The first edition came in two volumes in 1697; he produced the second—which is fuller and the last that he revised—in 1702, with little matter removed, but much (e.g., art. *Zoroaster*) added, including four important *Eclaircissements*. Three English versions, one (1710) with ample garnish by our own theologians, preceded the fifth French edition of 1740.¹

Bayle had at first only wished to mend the blunders of a huge compilation, the biographical dictionary of Moréri; but he went on to make an arm-
The Dictionary. mory of all his own knowledge, so far as it did not repeat previous dictionaries, and of his own opinions. The result is a scientific scrutiny, on a great scale, of certain lines of history (especially the political biography of the last two centuries), of clerical controversy, of many matters of classical lore and exegesis, and of the biographies of the great humanists. He left out most of those thinkers, except Spinoza, who were alien to his point of view, and probed deeply for present use the early heresies which he liked. His brief and rather juiceless text stands above

¹ The standard modern edition of the *Dictionnaire* is Beuchot's, 16 vols., Paris, 1820-21. The other works of Bayle (*Œuvres diverses*, The Hague, 1727-31 (again 1737), 1 vols.) have, neglectfully enough, never been reprinted.

the army of notes that contain his erudite and dissolvent criticism, his opinions, and his best writing. These notes form one of the chief works of the seventeenth century. On one side Bayle is a founder of scientific biography, which could never be quite so purely traditional or superstitious afterwards. He also insinuated the subjection of the Bible narrative to the natural canons of inquiry. None could miss the parallel handling of the articles *Jupiter* or *Hercules*, and of *Adam*, *Cain*, or *Abraham* as masses of legend equally miscellaneous, absurd, or (as in the treatment of *David*) immoral. The comparison of creeds in *Mahomet* is equally incisive and more candid. To us it often seems a barren line; but religion and thought had to be purged by the destructive intellect, and emptied for the time, by a sort of abstraction, of their poetical beauty or historical warrant, only to receive these elements again, long afterwards, when the regulative intellect has done its work. But Bayle's view of the world is still of interest, and requires a collation of many passages to be appreciated.

"En parcourant l'histoire nous ne trouvons que peu de triomphes de J.-Christ—*apparent vari nantes in* Rough summary *gurgite vasto*—et nous rencontrons partout of his thought. les trophées du Démon." Man is by no means wholly amiss, but the evil and misery revealed by history are incurable and constant (art. *Macon*, note C). Man is fated to remain irrational, for he tortures himself with religious wars over matters of insoluble speculation. On these matters little truth or assurance is possible. The disputes are further a perpetual

source of bad faith. "There are no groundless distinctions that have not served to shirk the disagreeable consequences that were foreseen if the Thomists admitted any affinity with the Calvinists or with the Jansenists; and there is no sophism that the Molinists have not used to prove that St Augustine did not preach Jansenism." The exhausted spectator of these feuds is landed provisionally in a state, so to speak, of stable suspense equidistant from all creeds (art. *Pyrrhon*). But if it is asked what theory, after all, best explains, or restates, these facts of man, history, and thought, then Bayle has his preferences. The God of Spinoza, the general substance of which things good and ill are alike modes, is too much burdened with such incongruities, and he is even a little absurd. One of the hardest theories of all to refute is the opposite theory to Spinozism, Manicheism.¹ The world might seem to point, not to an Evil One the creature of God, but to "une nature éternelle et inécée, distincte de Dieu, et ennemie de Dieu, et méchante essentiellement." Bayle glosses this theory in various airy ways, imagining a kind of prophetic contract, struck in chaos before the creation, between the two parties, in order to save an undignified struggle afterwards. And when he was pressed about his orthodoxy, he executed a bewildering crab-like retreat, half-sincere, half-politic. For the mass of his fellow-men he offers no creed but the minimum of doctrine and the rule of plain tolerant sense, without

¹ See arts. *Manichéens*, *Pauliciens*, the 2nd *Eclaircissement*, and *Réponse aux Questions*, &c. (1703), chap. xcii.

any finessing or Jesuitry in matters of conduct (art. *Loyola*, note *G*). The mystery of free-will, he holds, is ultimate, whether it engage the philosophical question *Am I free?* or the theological question *Was Adam free to sin?*¹ As to faith, Bayle took an irritating line that was quite transparent but not easy to force through. The mysteries of theology, he says with his tongue in his cheek, are insoluble by reason. But they are matters of faith, and we must swallow them; what more would the theologians have? Thus, professing for religion's sake to revert to something like the old Cartesian schism between faith and reason, Bayle, as all could see, really applied the Cartesian acid to all the forbidden matter, and left very little of it sound. By virtue of all this he is the parent of the Encyclopedists and their source of wisdom: although, as has often been noted, he remains, unlike Voltaire or Rousseau, a recluse and disinterested critic, bent on sifting truth rather than on improving man and the world, and doubting their power ever to improve as heartily as any Calvinist.

Bayle had to write volumes in self-defence, and always found new tactics and new stores of knowledge.

Later works and position. His *Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial* is a bundle of discursive essays. His *Entretiens*, where Maxime and Thémiste vie in refuting Origen and Jean Leclerc, and his *Continuations* of the *Pensées sur la Comète*, are the chief of the remainder. His private letters are to be counted among his liter-

¹ See art. *Jansenius*, notes *G* and *H*, for Bayle's logic at its raciest.

ary works (1672-1706). They reflect his absorbed life, lived wholly in books and polemic, quite free from the scandal attached by the preachers to "libertine" theory, and warmed, if ever, by the two passions for critical exactitude and for general toleration. The higher kind of brooding is blankly absent. The quality in his writings that lures soonest and wears longest is a steady, minutely flashing play of intellect, perhaps *habitans in sicco*, but animating his bulk of matter with a piquant lightness. He writes without much revision or construction of wholes, but soundly and subtly. The *Dictionnaire* is simply "thoughts scattered haphazard," where he "runs at a loose rein up hill and down dale." Still he takes some pains to use efficiently the *style lié*—linked, and periodic, and difficult, but rewarding—in preference to the *style coupé*, what we might call the atomic style, where all the sentences are pellets. His speech anticipates that of Voltaire in its absence of the exalted, or of the divine element; but it is to be honoured for its tenacious expression of whatever truth may be won without those ingredients. He stands far above Locke as a writer, and was in the field before him. He argued for toleration on really wider grounds than Locke, and remained his chief associate in the eyes of the eighteenth century. The essence of his task implied the lack of Locke's constructive power in dealing with first principles. But his real achievement was to release the Cartesian doubt from its worst limitation, the ignoring of the past, and to give it free play upon wide areas of human history and speculation.

The attitude taken by the classical literature, with its Cartesian heaven, towards history, scholarship, and learning at large—towards the past, in *classicism and the past*. fact, as a means of culture—is worth discrimination. Rationalism begins, in England only less than in France, by slighting these things. The programme of the *Discours de la Méthode* nourishes the contempt of them. Truth is won by discarding experience and all the furniture of prejudice; the thinker works up by self-scrutiny from a comprehensive doubt. What then avails the past, what the salvage of truth that is washed up by history, what avail the hoary conclusions of thought, that are recorded in literature? Malebranche may be cited once more: he is full of tirades against the learned and what they know; he regards them as dreadful examples of the maltreatment of the reason by mere brute memory, and his high language on this matter is barely exceeded by that of the Scriblerus coterie in England half a century later. Another turn was given to this impulse in the critical debate “between the ancients and the moderns,” which will be noted in our next chapter. The conceit, as we have dared to call it, of the classical age, also told powerfully, though by no means quite triumphantly, for the severance of scholarship from letters, and for the pursuit of it, if at all, as a thing out of relation to art and culture. Both historical research and, as we have remarked, Greek, took a lower rank in the courses of education. The Académie des Inscriptions, which was to grow from limited beginnings into an organisation for

promoting scholarship, did not begin to publish transactions till after the end of the reign.

But in Bayle, and even before Bayle, there is the counter-impulse—namely, not to think the quest of learning irrational, but to make learning itself rational and critical. Neither France, nor England, nor any other land, was lightly to sacrifice what the great Renaissance scholars had disclosed of the life and facts of antiquity. Everywhere, during the classical triumph, the invasion of scholarship by the critical spirit is apparent. The succeeding chapters of this book will supply some further information. The changes from Rudbeck to Holberg in Scandinavia, from Theophilus Gale to Arbuthnot in England, and the later work of Muratori in Italy, all tell the same story. In the next century, while the contempt of minute learning was to become a formula with the *philosophes*, learning itself was to be silently purged and guided until it regained its due rank, and its union with the rational spirit was crowned in the history of Gibbon.

Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630-1721), the Bishop of Avranches, the learned controller of the classics edited in *usum Delphini*, the interpreter of Origen, versed in mathematics, science, and philosophy, the friend of Heinsius and Christina of Sweden, a multifarious author both in Latin and English, might alone save the name of French learning in the period.¹ He has the capacities of the old

¹ Works never collected, hardly in any case reprinted (except the *Traité de l'Origine des Romans*, 1671, which we note below under Fiction). See too his *Memoirs*, tr. J. Aikin (from the Latin), London, 1810, 2 vols.; and Pattison's *Essays*, Oxford, 1889, for a full study of the *Demonstratio Evangelica* and Huet generally.

types of *polyhistor* without their lumbering, their superstition, and their detachment from letters. His Latin alcaics and his cordial and amusing biography are very good of their kind. His speculative works, besides the *Censura* already named, included a curious *Traité philosophique de la Faiblesse de l'Esprit humain* (1723), which is not unlike certain modern pleas for the frailty of reason as an argument for orthodoxy. The Greek stoics, Plutarch, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, were translated by André Dacier soundly if without grace: they left little imprint on the French mind; there was no Sir Thomas North, and perhaps the Jansenists absorbed most of the stoical sentiment. Dacier also translated (1692) the *Portics* of Aristotle, bits of which were early commented on and diluted. Homer was popularised in the prose of Mme. Dacier, born Anne Le Fèvre (1654-1720), the *Iliad* being finished in 1699 and the *Odyssey* in 1708. Her preface to the former compares her version to the mummy of Helen of Troy, with the life and colour lost, but with certain lines and features rescued to mark "how she who keeps fairness even in the arms of death must in life have been truly like the immortals." Mme. Dacier's equipment was good, and most of her French is plain and direct: she and her husband were among the chief helpers in the Delphin editions.

Though there was no notable historian, apart from the makers of memoirs and the letter-writers, the bases for mediæval and modern history were strengthened in many ways. Charles Dufresne, usually known as Ducange, produced, in his *Glossarium ad scriptores*

medice et infimar Latinitatis (1678),—which was only the chief of many erudite works,—a mass of mediæval illustrations as well as a dictionary. The vast and noble energies of the Benedictine congregation of Saint-Maur, led by Mabillon (died 1707), Luc d'Achery, Montfaucon, and others, continued unperturbed by modish contempt. Organised and minute labour explored annals of all kinds and *Acta Sanctorum*, and promoted the science of diplomatic. French learning, towards the end of the reign, founded a journalism of its own, not only in Bayle, but in the Amsterdam professor Jean Leclerc (1657-1736), who continued the plan of Bayle's *Nouvelles* without his style or insight, but with knowledge and tenacity. Leclerc was Arminian in his views, and an ally of Locke in his political and religious attitude. He conducted, with a thoroughness that few modern journalists dare remember, three distinct *Bibliothèques*, one "universal and historical," one *choisie*, and one ancient and modern. Leclerc himself wrote most of these hundreds of little tomes, which are scarcely now to be read, but are an index to most of the erudite disputes current from 1696 to 1725. Lastly, from the Oratory, which bred Malebranche, the scorner of scholars, came also Richard Simon (1638-1712), whose Paris edition (1678) of his *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* was suppressed at the instance of Bossuet, and who, though now seldom named, was a father of biblical exegesis, and one of the deepest Hebraists of his time. He was driven to Holland, and brought out in 1685 a complete edition of his book, which was

followed by similar treatises on the text and versions, and at last by a fresh translation, of the New Testament. No contemporary so well saw and stated the linguistic difficulties of translating the Bible, or attacked them with so pure a veneration for the real text and meaning. Simon applied the same critical methods to patristic tradition, and faced the same great assailant. It was long before the patient and fundamental work of Simon was continued. In all these ways—and only a few types have been named—learning silently rose in caste by becoming critical. But the doctors of theology and eloquence have now to be mentioned.

The modern spirit that quickened in Descartes had few nobler or more prescient enemies than the puis-
Bossuet; his
career.
sant champion of the Gallican Church and
the greatest preacher of France, Jacques-
Bénigne Bossuet¹ (1627-1704), whose voice, at once
sword and trumpet, is heard in the *mêlée* of most of
the battles fought during that day within the Chris-
tian pale; and who, flourishing in the courtly age,
keeps the bearing and temper, the vehemence and
masculine trenchancy, of the preceding. This prince
of religious debaters and orators sprang from a legal
and professional stock, and was the seventh son of
Bénigne Bossuet, of Dijon, “avocat au Parlement.”

¹ *Œuvres*, 43 vols., Versailles, 1815, and 31 vols., ed. Lachat, 1862; a fair selection, 4 vols., Firmin-Didot, 1870, &c.; Floquet's *Études sur la Vie de Bossuet* (1855) supplement the old and very full life by Bausset (1815). The able studies by Brunetière, and by G. Lanson (*Bossuet*, 1891), seem touched with the present neo-Christian reaction in France.

At Dijon he was born in September 1627, and learnt Latin and Greek at the Jesuit school. Thence he left for Paris in 1642, to be trained at the College of Navarre. No Frenchman has caught like Bossuet what he calls "the genius and turn of the sacred language"; and it was early that he began to form his most glorious attribute, his diction; by study, as he tells us, of the Vulgate as corrected by the other Latin text of the so-called Vatable version. He also became precocious in dispute and harangue. His theses are lost, but we have many of the sermons that he preached at Metz, whither he went in 1648, becoming four years later priest and doctor. There, amidst a mixed people of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, Bossuet was moulded, and there he preached and converted for many years. There, in 1655, came out his *Réfutation* of Ferry's catechism; there he began to stock his arsenal for his great onslaught on the Reformed Churches; and there also began his long career, so essentially public, played in full robes upon the stage of history; and so free from any real hint of the mystical or intimate elements (despite his use of these as of other dialects), or of the retiredness and soliloquy of the saints. Whatever was in him, Bossuet was impelled to throw into words that he could confide *only* to the multitude, to the sheep and inferiors who were thus to be led.

Sainte-Beuve and others have shown that for ten years Bossuet's pulpit eloquence was often too violent and Oriental in colour, and that he had not yet, through contact with king and court, learnt the keep-

ing and measure which to an Englishman coming fresh from South or Taylor stamp him as "Augustan." But when he began to preach at Paris in 1659, he was already in advance of Mascaron by six years, and of Bourdaloue and of Massillon by more. He preached his first sermon at court in 1661; the next eight years mark his partial acclimatisation in its air, his slow but undisputed rise to the headship of the Gallicans, his energy as a director of souls in a wider field than Metz. It was late before his preaching was recognised as supreme. His crowning capture was that of Tur-
enne (1668); the *Exposition de la Foi catholique* was printed 1671. In that year he resigned the distant see of Condom, which he had held since his installation as tutor to the Dauphin in 1670. The works written during the next nine years for that stony prince show Bossuet's master-gift of organising, for instructive ends, matter given to him. He mixed a cautious dose of Descartes, Aquinas, and common-sense in his religious handbook founded on psychology, the *Traité de la Connoissance de Dieu et de Soi-même*; his *Politique tirée de l'Ecriture Sainte* draws up a policy for the earthly, who is to answer to the heavenly, despot, and brings out some of the despotic conclusions of the *Leviathan* (which he probably knew) by some of the literal methods of Milton's *Christian Doctrine*; while the *Discours sur l'Histoire universelle* (1681) presents more thoroughly than any other book the providential reading of history.

In 1681 Bossuet became Bishop of Meaux, and he was the spokesman of the Gallicans against Rome in their

famous Declaration ; but his *Defensio Cleri Gallicani* (printed 1745), and his other Latin writings composed in the same interest,¹ are of far less moment than his controversial triumph, the *Histoire des Variations des Eglises protestantes* (1688), the chief of many works in the same campaign : and here, though published as late as 1753, may be named the far less able and urbane *Défense de la Tradition et des Saints Pères*, directed in name against Simon, but really against the whole conception of interpreting Scripture and weighing tradition by the free and trained reason. From 1694-99, besides continuing to rule and preaching in his see, and to enforce, though with moderation, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and besides keeping up his vast correspondence—so lucid, imperious, unbetraying, and inhuman—Bossuet waged his victorious debate with Fénelon in the matter of Quietism. Of secondary note in the history of thought, this battle is a great exhibition of character. Bossuet spoke for the logical and positive spirit of his race ; he believed in hard moral effort and discipline, and in keeping the mind clear, within the pale of the articles : he was revolted by the passive soul that remains a mere conduit for divine grace, and by the mystic Mme. Guyon and her beatifications. Thus, under his frigid forms, he becomes, in his formidable *Relation sur le Quietisme*, 1698, which was the harshest blow in the whole war, somewhat brutal, like an eagle that rends its prey without

¹ For the moderation of Bossuet's Gallicanism, see A. Rebbliau in *Petit de Julleville*, vol. v. p. 271 ; and for his theology, see Rebbliau's exhaustive work, *Bossuet Historien du Protestantisme*, Paris, 1891.

dignity. In his latter years Bossuet did not draw in his talons: and he was busy with more controversies than need here be named, and he also gave himself, though with more sympathy and unction than of old, to his work as confessor and administrator of souls. His *Méditations sur l'Évangile* and his much inferior *Élevations à Dieu sur tous les Mystères de la Religion chrétienne* are among the later of his works: they are pastoral, benignant, glowing, and perhaps rather obvious; the devotions of our Bishop Joseph Hall might be named in the same breath with the *Elevations*. They chiefly prove his great adaptiveness. Bossuet died at Paris in 1704.

“Mon sermon est fait, ne me restant plus à trouver que les paroles.” Bossuet’s discourses, apart from his *The greatest of elegiac and panegyrical pieces, are hard to preachers.* date, were very seldom published¹ by himself, and do not remain to us as he spoke them. But the constant sacrifice of petty finish only restores the sound of the living and improvising voice. These vast collections of sermons are enough to establish the greatness of the writer. His images and comparisons alone, drawn from the breadth of human life, from the pangs of childbirth, from the rival love of parents for the child, from the Virgilian picture of the upright orator swaying the people, from the storm and ocean, would attest him for a prose poet; and continually can be heard the strain peculiar to a great spirit living in a time of show and misery. “This life will go very

¹ Lebarq, *Histoire critique de la Prédication de Bossuet*, 1891. The sermon, *Sur l'Unité de l'Eglise*, 1681, is an exception.

fast: it will melt like a day of winter, when evening and morning come close together. It is but a day, a moment, which irksomeness and infirmity make us think long. When it has faded, you will see how short it has all been." The man who wrote this had read his Pascal—though his precise debt to Pascal is most uncertain—and was at least a kindred spirit: and it is the constant murmur of such a refrain that raises him in grandeur above all his French contemporaries.

But in Bossuet the perception of the free and sceptical standpoint is never, as it is in Pascal, sympathetic. His scheme of the world is unwavering, like his tone of authority. Few writers could begin an address to the Eternal, "Il vous sied bien, ô Roi des siècles!" And the tone is the same when he addresses Louis, the viceroy who is given unlimited powers to enforce divine truth, and expected to act up to his position. There is to be no doubt who is the common enemy: it is not so much vice as curiosity, the libertine and damnable spirit of criticism, the "freedom of the natural soul," concentrated above all, to Bossuet's apprehension, in the miscreant Montaigne, so long dead in the flesh, but a parent of many sceptics. For the whole tribe of men who are the ultimate enemies of the Church, the men who do without, or who dare to judge, the dogmatic conception of life, Bossuet has an infallible instinct; his whole order's sense of self-preservation seems to collect in him. It was the same penetration that guided his venomous arrows against the dead Molière in the *Maximes et Réflexions sur la Comédie*, which are full of nice observation of the

enemy's plans. He is not a flexible judge of men, and is never at one with the society in which he lived; but he has a broad strategy, an intuition of the world which reminds us, in its fearless concise phrasing, of La Rochefoucauld and the classics of the bitter old stamp. His dissection, deeper than Barrow's, of evil-speaking and the heart inflamed by anger, and of the "ambitieux qui ne se connait pas," are of the same order. And there remains the background upon which these reflections are cast up; the constant vanity of life, interrupted as it is by offences, death, and trouble. "Il ne reste plus à l'homme que le péché et le néant:" from this high vantage-ground Bossuet sees beneath him clear, far, and contemptible, the vagaries of the insect man.

The panegyrics, of which the most celebrated is on Paul, and the *Oraisons funèbres*, number some compositions which the French are fond of comparing to the greatest of Cicero's. They are indeed great; but they are also full of false beauties, which doubtless, as Pascal says of Cicero's, have "a multitude of admirers." The falsity is not in the form; that is perfect, and reminds us of the best speeches of antiquity. But the court atmosphere which gives some classic qualities to Bossuet's utterance also helps to exaggerate if not pervert his report. He himself saves us comment when, in his sermon on Henrietta Maria (1669), he approves the remark that "queens cannot drown," and when he wonders at Cromwell and other persons so rootedly suspicious of "all that pertains to author-

Obituaries.

ity" being permitted to survive. More touching, despite a certain grandiloquence, is the earlier oration (1663) on his old master, Cornet; while the greatest is perhaps the last, on Condé¹ (1687), where Bossuet bids the pulpit farewell and lays down the trumpet for ever.

In the *Discours sur l'Histoire universelle* the point of view is this: the peoples of old, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, as well as Palestine, are shown The Discours. to be blindly laying the foundations of the Roman Church. Or, this should be said rather of the princes of old than of the peoples. For Bossuet is full of the traditional idea that history should be written down in the form of a manual for princes, having been chiefly made by their doings. On the other hand, princes are fragile things, pawns which the divine hand moves about for its own ends (much as the half-pagan mediæval goddess of Fortune moved them about for no end at all). The lesson, therefore, for the Dauphin who reads the plan of history is, that he must work in the line of the divine purposes on pain of frustration and disappearance. And these purposes embrace, on the spiritual side, righteousness, which again supposes right doctrine; and, materially, the reign of the true Church. Bossuet is never greater than when, to enforce these ideas, he impetuously leaves detail and sweeps over all history. Sainte-Beuve has noted how the divisions into chapter and section

¹ The chief among the rest are those on "Madame," Duchess of Orleans (1670), on Maria Theresa (1683), and on Michel Le Tellier (1686).

have slipped in from the margin of the first edition, where the text ran in a single stream. The first book, *La Suite des Temps*, begins with the Old Testament, and ends with Charlemagne, including twelve epochs in all for the whole of the record. The second and greatest, *La Suite de la Religion*, retells the history from the theological point of view. The third, *Les Empires*, retraces the secular history to show how the empires of this world "have subserved religion and the survival of the people of God," seeing that they all ended in something counter to the conceit of their braggart founders. Subject to these preconceptions, Bossuet treats certain sides of antiquity with a large sympathy. He is moved by the grandiosity of Egypt and Persia and the great realms that came to nothing, and of Alexander, "plein des tristes images de la confusion qui devait suivre sa mort." Contrariwise, the sentence passed by Milton's Christ upon the arts of Athens is more intelligent than that of Bossuet, who sees in them only an anticipation of the fatal modern spirit. In the last resort, his argument for the mission of the French Church or Crown is an appeal to the established fact of their survival amid the wrecks of history, and is destroyed with them. But no universal chronicle was ever so broadly conceived or conducted.

The *Histoire des Variations*—to which may be added the various defences and *Arrestements* that followed it—embodies controversially the doctrines that appear in set form in the *Exposition de la Foi catholique*. In the preface of the

Histoire des
Variations.

Histoire is the famous argument which the whole book enforces—namely, that the Protestant sects are internecine in their articles, and therefore erroneous, while the Catholic Church is consistent, and therefore infallible. Bossuet's dialectical advantage is that, unlike his adversaries, he can use the full strength of his position. Jurieu (whom Bossuet battered in his *Avvertissements aux Protestants*), or Basnage, or Burnet, remaining within the reformed doctrines, could not, any more than all others who remain there, state the full service of Protestantism to the world. They could not vindicate reason or personal judgment to the utmost without giving up more than they dared or wished. They could not represent the strifes concerning sacraments or covenants as so many sallies and struggles of the human mind fain to come to terms with its own reason. Bossuet could and did go the whole length of his own principles, and say that variety of belief proved nothing but the futility of individual thought: see the chaos in which your reason lands you, if it be once rebellious! His ultimate aim is always to restore unity, by recovering Protestantism, whose enduring essence he did not understand, to the Church. (See p. 330 *post.*)

The lasting fascination of the *Histoire* is due to its erudition, which has been shown to be singularly fair and sound, to its intellectual mastery and iron grasp of subtleties, to its tone of freedom from vulgar modes of dispute, and to its command of Pascal's weapon, "grave and temperate irony." Luther's violences are exhibited as absurd and vulgar rather than

criminal, in the eyes of urbane and judicious persons. Calvin is saluted as one who "wrote French as well as any man in his generation," and heresies are by no means always the work of the profligate and impious. But Bossuet is most formidable in dealing with the half-minded, with the compromises of the logical Calvin himself, and his real esteem is kept for the most thorough-going, and therefore most thoroughly damned, of heretics, Zwingli, who makes the communion a mere memento.

Bossuet is the chief embodiment in modern times of a certain side of the Latin spirit. From the first his mind, with its hardness, clearness, and grip, its inclination to stately second-hand exposition, and its sovereign sense of composition and structure, is Latin. It is in this sense only that we may understand his "humanism" and the "union of the two antiquities," sacred and profane, in his person, for which he has been overpraised. He has all the qualities of a jurist or advocate, and uses them to the end of bringing truth into clearness; if souls are to be lost, it shall not be his fault. This union of an almost legal attitude and gifts with the poetical spirit and a style winged and exalted by the passion of the Cross, is hard to match. Bossuet felt—at least in others—the pressure of the doubt, melancholy, and exploring temper of the Renaissance, and nothing but the Christian system, realised in a special polity, seemed able to cope with such dangers. Of the intellectual movement without the Christian order, of the advance of science, of Spinoza, he had a fierce mistrust but

no definite knowledge, while of variations within that order, as we have seen, he has the eye possessed by a great commander for the operations of deserters.

Always an orator or pleader, Bossuet is also, by a coincidence quite rare in modern times, always a great writer. Burke, of whom the same is to be said, is in style not so surely great. After his early efforts, Bossuet writes in a manner that by second nature is nearly perfect. He has many languages, but only one voice; he always goes to the height of his subject, and seldom beyond it. He is simple and natural and bare, but across his bareness flit streaks of gorgeous light and colour. He has some virtues both of the heroic and of the urbane generations of French literature. "The Father," Massillon called him, "of the seventeenth century;"—have the causes of human freedom and knowledge, which he spent his life in retarding, ever enlisted such a prose as his?

Like Barrow and South in England, but in his own vaster measure, Bossuet reminded his courtly audiences of a spacious utterance to which their fathers were better used than they. But in each land there was a preacher, contemporary in years with these great men, but of a younger style; younger partly by the lack of that heroic echo, and partly by a profounder community with the temper of the new public. Tillotson, we shall see, has the intellectual virtues of his moment and no more. Louis Bourdaloue (1632-1704) might be called a French Tillotson, so much is he one of those

*Bourdaloue ;
logic and
observation.*

whom he addresses, so radical a trait is the rational conduct of his oratory, so plain is the disappearance of poetry. But he is a classic, while Tillotson is not; he speaks from a greater weight of soul and observation, he satisfied a finer taste. Bourdaloue was born at Bourges, became a Jesuit very early, and for many years led the formidable life of hard work and humility which informs the nobler Jesuit discipline. His talent was sifted and discovered; he appeared as a preacher in Paris nearly ten years after Bossuet, in 1669; and his vogue in the pulpit became probably at least as great as Bossuet's—for he was less alarming, there was less in him that the generation could not follow, and the excellences of his discoursing were those for which it thirsted.¹ His days were undisturbed by ambition, which the rule of his Order excludes. His works consist of the sermons that he preached during a long life, including conspicuously twelve *Arénts* and eighteen *Carêmes*. These are preserved either as memoranda, or in forms more or less completely revised under his eye,² and include all the varieties of exhortation, panegyric, and funeral speech—the two latter kinds being sparse and inferior in comparison—as well as a collection of ethical and religious maxims, that tell us much of his private thought.

At first, to a foreigner, Bourdaloue seems a little

¹ On the relative vogue of the two orators see F. Brunetière's article on Bourdaloue in the *Grande Encyclopédie*.

² First issued collectively, 1707-34. Modern edd., 1822, and Guérin's, 1864. Selections (Firmin-Didot), 3 vols., 1877.

trite and scholastic. Trite in substance he often remains; he is not a great religious thinker; the most original parts of his preaching are his observations of the world, which he knew very well, and from which he is yet detached. His analysis of *False Ambition*, for instance, though without the personal pungency that distinguishes La Bruyère, ranks him with that school of observers of the mid-reign, not very hardy or outspoken in allusion, but critics, inwardly unsubdued, of the court-world and its comedy. But most of Bourdaloue's preaching is strongly ethical and practical. His deeper affinity with Barrow and the Anglican Arminians is certainly to be seen in his acceptance of freewill as a practical base of operations for moral instruction. He is, no doubt, as has been said by a French critic, often as severe in tone as a Jansenist. But the difference is this, that the severe creeds, Calvinism and Jansenism, which deny and humiliate in various ways man's initiative, have ever marked down man's imagination as their prey, and have imposed a rigid life more as a sign of his littleness than as a means of his safety. The humaner, suppler, more inconsistent forms represented in the Anglican compromise, or in some kinds of Catholicism, reflect the inconsequence of the humanity that they recognise, and have numbered many a systematic, solid moralist who is apt perhaps to press too strongly on what Bourdaloue himself calls *La Prudence du Salut*, or other-worldliness, but who is also noble and disinterested. Of these is Bourdaloue: not that he fails of authority. His voice, reported to have been sweet

and monotonous, sometimes rises: his eyes, which, as they are shown in his best portrait, he kept closed in preaching, seem to gaze austerely, as he urges the immitigable fatality of sin, the lot of the lost, and as he pictures, with the refrain *illic reptilia quorum non est numerus*, the social world of hidden passions, ramifying calumnies, and embittered aims, which he has seen.

But his usual strength—and here we put our finger on what charmed his contemporaries—is in the perfect exposition of a religious, preferably an ethical, idea that lends itself to the quotation of the preacher's experience. The ordering, that seems at first scholastic, with its exordium, its two or three points announced, subdivided, summed, and accomplished, soon becomes impressive for its endless skill and flawless rigour. It is like fine close chainwork of strong if not precious metal, a little dulled with the centuries, but sound in all its junctures and fringes. The scope and the various manners of Bourdaloue might be fairly illustrated from his sermons on *Ambition* (sixth after Pentecost); on *L'Éternité malheureuse* (a title hard to translate); on the conversion of the Magdalen (so artfully riveted, after the orator's favourite fashion, with the key-phrase *dilexit, elle aime*); on *The Estate of Marriage*; and on St Ignatius Loyola. In all of these there is the same sure linking of parts, the same abundant, unbroken, ample speech, seldom precisely great and commanding, but always naturally at a high pitch, and impressed with the speaker's fine temper, which is witnessed by all contemporaries. As a mental document, his discourse *On Hypocrisy* should

be bound up with the *Tartuffe*, to which it is a rejoinder; and Bourdaloue is more dignified than Bossuet in his attacks on Molière as the pattern of the "libertins."

The strength of Fléchier¹ and Massillon lies in lyric eloquence, and not in composition, in consequence, or in analysis. Esprit Fléchier, at first a *Decadence*;
Fléchier and somewhat mundane abbé, reputed for his
Massillon. trifles in French and Latin verse, and more justly for his *Grand Jours d'Auvergne*, the most instructive provincial chronicle of the time (see p. 63), emerged from the society of the *précieuses*, spoke the funeral elegy of Mme. de Rambouillet, and gained great repute for this kind of composition. He has not the intellect or span of his great precursors; but in his sermons on the Duc de Montausier, on the first president de Lamoignon, and notably in that on Turenne (1676), his prose has the rhythms of a poetical soul; and though he did not much excel in the usual kinds of preaching, he has a chanting passage on the phantasmal unreality of the world and its personages, that nearly recalls the *Apologia* of Newman.² In 1687 Fléchier became Bishop of Nîmes, and died in 1710. Another oration on Turenne, delivered by Jules Mascaron, Bishop of Tulle, is more sober and concrete in its treatment.

¹ Fléchier, *Œuvres complètes*, 10 vols., Nîmes, 1782. Massillon, *Œuvres complètes*, 1865-68; *choisies* (Garnier), 1868. Both often reprinted in selections.

² *Panegyriques et autres Sermons*, Brussels, 1696, vol. ii. p. 521: "Le monde . . . cette foule de figures qui se présentent à mes yeux et s'évanouissent."

Jean-Baptiste Massillon (1663-1742) did not begin to preach at Paris till the end of the century, and in his elegiac discourse on Louis XIV. the pulpit eloquence of the reign is heard beating up for a last fitful flight. Massillon (who only became Bishop of Clermont in 1717) began as a professor of rhetoric: he has no deep instruction in divinity, he is too intent on the pleasure that he receives from his own antitheses and balanced clauses, and the decadence of classicism is also sharply felt in the poverty of his co-ordinating powers and of his intellectual basis. But he has too much sincerity and too much passionate sensibility to be, as he is often called, a declaimer, and he keeps alive the tradition of magnificence.

The history of pulpit oratory in France and England will show many affinities during this period. In both

<i>French and English preaching compared.</i>	lands the best preachers addressed the court and society, and took from or shared with their audience the liking for ethical rather than doctrinal discoursing. In both there is the constant use of worldly experience for spiritual illustration, the dislike of false wit and effusive excess, the taste for structure and clearness, and all the other tastes that follow from the tacit appeal that is made on every hand to reason and intelligence. But the English pulpit had a deeper original fund of fantasy and poetry—a fund therefore not so soon exhausted. Its greatness, as will be seen hereafter, cannot be said to have grown in the measure that reason came to penetrate its eloquence. Nay, its close, in and after Tillotson, is really a decadence, for poetry has gone,
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while the reason that has come is not of a high quality, and tends merely to the organisation of compromises and commonplaces. But in France, as we have seen, reason perfected the Catholic preaching, the decay of which consists in the corrosion of the rational structure, the re-invasion of rhetoric, and the loss of measure and taste.

Of the greater Catholic spirits that reigned during this period, the strangest is Fénelon,¹ who lapses far from the sincerity of masculine reason that does honour to Bossuet or Bourdaloue, but who by power of temperament prefigures some of the sensibility, the liberalism, the expansiveness, of eighteenth-century France. François de Salignac (or Salagnac) de la Mothe-Fénelon (1651-1715) was born in Périgord at the château of his family, which, as he never forgot, was noble; and after a priestly education at Saint-Sulpice and elsewhere, at once revealed himself a born converter and missionary. Two instincts and gifts co-operate within him from the first and always. One is that of mastering, by a mixture of supple adaptiveness and stony will, difficult and valuable souls in behalf of himself and the Church. The converted Protestants in the house of the *Nouvelles Catholiques*, and those who might be won in the Huguenot region of Saintonge, where Fénelon went after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were

¹ *Œuvres*, ed. Lebel, 22 vols., 1820-30, and 12 vols. of *Correspondance*. Many reprints of the educational, critical, and fabulous works—*e.g.*, in Garnier's vols. See Brunetière in *Grande Encycl.*, and Mahrenholtz. *Fénelon, Erzbischof von Cambrai*, Leipzig, 1896.

his natural quarry; and the mass of his large correspondence reveals him as a marvellous and adaptive "director," ready and able to intrude, to control, and to spare no personal rights or secrets. But, secondly, he is a humane lover of his kind, full of a high-bred, inexhaustible goodwill to them. Love and charity are always on his lips, and he also wrought in their service. His *ultima ratio* is not intellectual at all, but a very complex kind of feeling, wherein the active sympathy with man blends with a strangely purged and subtilised love of God,—the famous "pur amour" about which he wrote, and we must add chicaned, so profusely. Such a temper can only be crudely figured within our limits. But, thirdly, Fénelon is led by Christian philanthropy to be, though at first not overtly, a political idealist, formed by revulsion against the aims and system of Louis XIV. Here the educator and "director" reappears; for it was the baffled aim of his career to form the king who should be the antidote.

Fénelon became known through the interest of Mme. de Maintenon, of Bossuet, and of various noble protectors; through his preaching; and *Education of young women*, through his *Traité de l'Education des Filles*, published in 1687. Saint-Cyr, the famous training-school for girls of the gentle or high-born class, was founded a little later, and Fénelon is a pioneer in educational doctrine. He gives instructions for the schooling of a young wife of the educated ranks—a kind of Gallic, if sometimes a comic, mate for the creditable gentleman and citizen contemplated by

Locke. His counsels of simplicity in life, rational training without pedantry, avoidance of *bel esprit*, volatility, and vanity, are fresh for their day in theory and statement, though the product may strike us as a little dull and overtrained, and the theories as marred by the illusion that women are as plastic material to the educator as men. It is significant and amusing that he discourages Italian and Spanish as fitting languages for women, and upholds Latin as more *reasonable*, and as withal the tongue of mother Church. The work is that of a priest; it has its touch of tyranny and inquisition. The "suave and youthful gravity" for which it is praised rather rises in the English gorge; but it is remarkable and beyond its time.

In 1689 Fénelon was made preceptor of the "children of France," and in particular of the Duc ^{and of the} de Bourgogne, who was the grandson of "*petit Dauphin*," the king, and, after Bossuet's pupil the Dauphin, the heir-presumptive. This appointment determined Fénelon's chief ambition, and it produced some of the best of his writings. His pupil he controlled and civilised perhaps too well. Fénelon's real nature, or one of his natures, appears in some of the harsh letters that he afterwards administered to the Duc de Bourgogne as a tonic to undo his own discipline. The books that he wrote while actually tutor fall into two classes, political and inventive, and have but one purpose, which may be crudely summarised as that of forming a monarch in all respects contrary to Louis XIV. and subject to Fénelon.

His expressly political writings are considerable. The *Examen de Conscience sur les Devoirs de la Royauté* is from his own hand; and the *Essai politique* His politics. *sur le Gouvernement civil*, which goes much deeper, purports to be his conversations held with "James III.," and edited by their friend the "Chevalier de Ramsai." There are also sundry memoranda on the Spanish war, and the plan of government usually entitled the *Tables de Chaulnes*, made up by Fénelon and others during the hopeful interval between the death of the Dauphin and that of the Duc de Bourgogne. Lastly, there is the surprising *Lettre à Louis XIV.*, seemingly written about 1699, and proved to be genuine, but not known to have been ever published or presented at the time. This is Fénelon's most superb composition, formidable, commanding, rhetorical but not incorrect, a text fit for Michelet, the first daring sound of the reaction. Fénelon's ideal king abominates war and injustice only less than luxury and corruption; he is sober, humane, friendly, accessible, the master of a brotherhood of subjects; yet—and we may remember that the modeller was conversing with James III.—he is still an absolute king, irremovable by inherited right, and by divine authority pitiless to rebels.

Most of these ideas recur also in Fénelon's works of art, designed to divert his pupil into a discreet and royal behaviour. But the modern interest How far a Grecian? of the *Fables*, of the *Dialogues des Morts* (first instalment, 1700, and so later than Fontenelle's), and of the *Aventures de Télémaque* (1699 and 1717),

is different. Fénelon's style, his charm, his wit, his Hellenism, are in these writings. The best of them are those in which his Hellenism is strongest and his rather unctuous didactic intention is most forgotten; in the fables of *Aristée et Virgile*, and of *Les Aventures d'Aristonôus*; in the dialogues of Achilles, and in the mutual praises of Horace and Virgil. His genius is greatest in those passages of the *Télémaque* where the passion and sense for the antique are genuine. Such are the Virgilian pantheism (book iv.), the figure (book viii.) of the new city rising like a budded flower, the journey to hell, the vague trouble of Telemachus before the unknown Ulysses. Fénelon can appropriate the tender and gracious episodes and the soft elegiac landscapes of the classical poets, and he can capture the luxuriant descriptive language, a gift perhaps of the decadence, but of a great decadence. Now and then, as in his *Mémoire sur les Occupations de l'Académie française*, to which we shall return as a classic of criticism, he rises to the searching Platonic quality of style, which kindles a clear light within the imagination. But his Hellenism is also limited by his incompetence, shown in the *Télémaque*, to produce, what he can talk so well about, unity and composition in a long work.

His other writings are on matters of philosophical and theological dispute, and cannot be more than *Or a religious* named. His *Traité de l'Existence et des metaphysicien ?* *Attributs de Dieu* (1713, &c.), with its appeal to popular science, is the chief counterpart in France to the "physico-theology" current at the time in

England. Its reasoning and science are flimsy beside Ray's and Boyle's, but Fénelon writes immeasurably better than any English apologist of the school. The *Réfutation* (unpublished till 1820) of Malebranche's *Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce* was penned at the instance of Bossuet, and is chiefly bent against the theorem that God works only by physical uniformities, or, in the phrase of the day, *voies générales*. It is skilful, but Fénelon had no steady grip of metaphysical distinctions, and his perplexing variety of utterance shows a mind that never came to terms with itself, or fathomed anything very sincerely. This is the radical fault in his vast mass of treatises, of which the central one is the *Explication des Maximes des Saints* (1697), and of letters, rejoinders, and parries, in respect of the affair of Quietism, already named in the life of Bossuet. The pertinent judgment of M. Thamin, Fénelon's latest chronicler, that he is "less a mystic than a theorist on mysticism," may explain the accumulation of distrust that visits the reader of these endless demonstrations. Mme. Guyon, amidst whatever haze and verbiage, was truly of the guild, her illuminations were sincere and sometimes noble. Fénelon may not fairly be styled an actor, for his feeling was deep; but his interest in the "pur amour de Dieu," already touched upon, quickly becomes a zest in the distinctions that he conjures up concerning it. In his duel with Bossuet he is like a fencer of the Italian style, ever in flight or incredibly quick motion sideways, matched against a Frenchman who plays straight. His position is at bottom unsound, like that

of all those who reason against reason; he will not fully, though he will sometimes,¹ take the ground of his personal intuitions, perhaps because he is not sure of them. Bossuet was alien, as has been said, to mysticism, whether true or dubious, and won a great strategic victory, which ended in the condemnation of Fénelon by the Pope² (1699). Defeated, he was practically sequestered in his archbishopric of Cambrai, where he had been appointed four years before. This defeat was the great shock to his ambition; he took it with his adroit dignity; the death of his pupil ended his political hopes; and he ended his days shepherding and writing.

With the Protestant disputants and divines we cross out of the literature that is geographically French.

Protestants: The freer lands, Switzerland and Holland, *Saurin.* gave birth to their best writing, which consists, not, as in England, of diaries of the spirit,—Germanic, inward, and uninstructed,—but of controversial history, oratory, and the complaints of the martyrs. Bayle himself was hatched by Protestantism, but speedily took to the open water, and suffered, or enjoyed, the vociferations from the shore. But besides his intellectual importance, he was one of the few noted Frenchmen writing in a foreign land

¹ See the letter to Mme. de Maisonfort. 5th April 1693: "Ce qui se présente à l'âme d'une manière simple et paisible est une lumière de Dieu pour la corriger. Ce qui vient par raisonnement, avec inquiétude, est un effet de votre naturel, qu'il faut laisser tomber peu à peu." For Molinos, a founder of Quietism, see p. 405 *post*.

² See Crouslé, *Fénelon et Bossuet*, 2 vols., 1891, for a diffuse but thorough history of the whole matter.

whose French did not suffer by banishment from the school of style and the centre of idiom. The flaws of *le style réfugié*, and its comparative provincialism of form, came to be seen more clearly after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), and the mass of publications that it called forth. Yet the Protestants were also missionaries of the French language, and played their part in making it the international tongue at the cost of Latin. What they wrote mostly concerns the history of opinion rather than that of letters, but there are a few names that echo long in the wars of the time. Jean Claude (1619-1687), "the great Claude," was perhaps their soundest dialectician. He won fame by debating with Port-Royal on the terrible question of the "perpetuity of faith"—that is, of the faith of the old Church—especially concerning the historical continuity of the belief in the Real Presence. His *Défense de la Réformation* (1673) was a strong piece of disputatious narrative, and he was respected by Bossuet, with whom he had many encounters, more than other adversaries. With the authority and simplicity of old age, he wrote (1686) his eloquent *Plaintes des Protestants cruellement opprimés dans le Royaume de France*. These grievous records are numerous. Besides Claude's and Bayle's may be named various works of Elie Benoît (*Histoire et Apologie*, 1687), and an ingenious little sketch or novel, sprinkled with furious invective, the *Entretiens des Voyageurs sur la Mer* of Gédéon Flournois. The loudest of the later apologists is Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713), whose blind rancour against Bossuet on the one hand and

Bayle on the other is excused by his untamable defence of the outraged Protestants, which carries him beyond the usual convention of loyally excusing the French king. Jurieu, a sincere fanatic without genius, wrote, besides, immense ephemeral works. Jacques Basnage (1653-1725), the prolix historian of the Church and also of the United Provinces, is undeniably and soundly learned, but attacked the *Histoire des Variations* by an effort to show the unity of Protestant and the instability of Romish doctrine. Nothing could better show the vantage-ground of Bossuet.

The whole of reformed Europe acclaimed as supreme the eloquence of Jacques Saurin (1677-1730), though there had been other orators of note, like Pierre Dubose, who was praised both by Louis XIV. and Bayle. Saurin was born at Nîmes, and formed at Geneva; he served as a soldier, and was not ordained till 1700. He was in London for some years as pastor of the Walloon Church, and learned some of the skill and method of Tillotson. He returned to Holland, and was soon the chief of Protestant orators. He published from 1708 to 1725 five volumes of sermons, which were put both into German and English. "Saurin's Bible," a kind of edifying paraphrase of both the Testaments, had a great vogue both in French and English. Saurin is an exile, the shepherd of martyrs, prone to be violent in phrase and image, and never trained in the classical virtues. When the memories of 1685 or the terrors of the Calvinistic theory surge within him, he is at moments like Milton—Milton writing prose. His sermon on the *Torments of Hell*

has the same turbulent, furious gusto. We hear of "cet étang ardent avec sa fumée, cette éternité avec ses abîmes, ces démons avec leur rage." In the sermon *Sur les Frayeurs de la Mort*, the common picture of the soul in the prison-house of the body is handled with real splendour. Saurin, as in his address *Sur la Pénitence de la Péchresse*, can also be humane, and his power is various. He was a true religious orator, with a noble voice and action.¹

¹ On these writers consult the works of F. Puaux—*c.g.*, *Les Précurseurs français de la Tolérance au xvii^e Siècle*, Paris, 1881; as well as Sayous, *Histoire littéraire de la France à l'Étranger au xvii^e Siècle*, 1853; and the recent work of V. Rossel, *La Littérature française hors de France*, 1897. Most have found no reprint. For Saurin, see *Sermons*, The Hague, 1749, first 5 vols.; and *Sermons choisis*, ed. M. C. Weiss, Paris, 1854. Also F. Berthault, *Saurin et la Predication protestante*, &c., 1875. Dubosc's *Sermons*, Rotterdam, 1692.

CHAPTER II.

FRENCH CHRONICLE, FICTION, AND POETRY.

REASON IN THE MUNDANE LITERATURE — WHAT STOOD FOR HISTORIES — MEMOIRS — FLÉCHIER — COURT MEMOIRS: FEMININE AND MASCULINE; CHOISY — THE “LIBERTINES”: LA FARE — BUSSY-RABUTIN — MME. DE SÉVIGNÉ — MME. DE MAINTENON — LITERARY WORTH OF THE LETTERS — LA BRUYÈRE: THE “CARACTÈRES” — ROMANCING MEMOIRS — THE LIFE-IN-DEATH OF THE OLD ROMANCES — MME. DE LA FAYETTE — “LA PRINCESSE DE CLÈVES” — ROMANCE: “NOS NUMERUS SUMUS” — REALISM: FURETIÈRE — “LE ROMAN BOURGEOIS” — THE “CONTE”: PERRAULT — LA FONTAINE’S CAREER — HIS VIEW OF THE SOCIAL ORDER AND OF LIFE — HIS INTERESTS — THE FABLE FORM — HIS STYLES — SUBSTITUTES FOR LYRIC POETRY — VERSE AND PROSE INTERCHANGEABLE.

THERE are many things in classicism, but the rational spirit is the deepest; and this truth may have become

Reason in the mundane literature clearer in surveying the literature of argument, knowledge, and doctrinal eloquence.

That literature is throughout enamoured of defined form, of orderly and cogent development. It is open and deliberate in its attacks upon the understanding of the vast audience that it addresses. There remain, however, great tracts of writing, of which this audience itself, the French world of the later seven-

teenth century, is the subject-matter. Such, on the one side, are memoirs, collections of correspondence, portraits, and maxims, which all profess to record contemporary traits and facts. Such, even, are the scandalous chronicles of the period, where the facts are doctored and arranged in order to be accepted as true. Such, finally, are avowed fiction and drama, where just the same world, only under invented combinations, is shown its face in the glass by its own children. These divisions, taken together, form a very large body of what may be classified as *mundane* literature. And here also the rational spirit, though in a somewhat different shape, is still the deepest thing. This will be seen in the next chapter, when the critical formulæ of the chief artists are examined, and their cult of that significant trinity of ideas—*reason, nature, antiquity*—is explained. Meanwhile it may be said that rationalism, even where the philosophical reason is not directly at work, comes out, in these fields where the subject is living and concrete, as *naturalism*. By this term may be denoted a zest for the detail of life and manners, and for the faithful presentation of character and scene,—true when they are actual, natural and probable when they are invented. Reason also asserts itself in the logical conduct of a plot, in the dramatic use of argumentative tirade. The love for lucidity and for the perfection of undecorated style is everywhere.

The poverty of historical writing has already been observed and partly accounted for. Mézeray, the last historian of note, in no proper sense belongs to the

time, though he published in 1668 an excellent *Abbrégé* of the *Histoire de France* which he had completed in 1651. The Abbé Fleury's *Histoire ecclésiastique*, though plainly written, does not fill the gap between the honourable, documentary labours of the Benedictines at the one extreme, and Bossuet's great treatises at the other. The *Histoire des Variations* is controversial in aim, and the *Discours* is after all rather a vision on the mount than a history. The circumstantial chronicles of writers like Saint-Réal and Varillas are romances arranged in cold blood upon a basis of facts. Hence the place of history is taken by the memoirs and letters, which are the record of the time by eye-witnesses. The two species differ mainly in this, that the letter gives the accent of incertitude, of living expectancy, and of the recollections of yesterday, while the memoir seeks to recover some of the same vivacity in a narrative, when events have shaken down in the writer's judgment. In both there is the same engrossment with the social comedy, of which the chief player is always what Mme. de Sévigné calls "the centre of things," the king; with the court, the mistresses, the victories, and the great organisation. In the collections of letters there are of course many other things as well,—religion, literature, philosophy, even scenery, even love. The memoirs are mostly personal and historical, and though they are many and piquant beyond all precedent, they must here be recited briefly. For one thing, it has been agreed to place the two greatest collections beyond the upper and lower limits severally of this sketch.

The Cardinal de Retz, who died in 1679, wrote down his memories of the antecedents and beginnings of the reign, and his style and temper are those of the fiercer generation, of the Fronde and the opposition. Saint-Simon, on the other hand, perhaps the greatest of all the writers that escape the pretended limitations of the French genius, with his “devouring eye and portraying hand,”—Saint-Simon is the galled, emancipated, disenchanted, and often perverted chronicler of the great reign, who does not start to edit his impressions till it is all past. In him the older passion and outspoken virility return, and *justesse* of tone is intermitted. His memoirs were not published till much later.

One work stands wholly detached from the others of this group—namely, the diary written by Fléchier (1665-66) on the *Grands Jours d'Auvergne*.

Fléchier. These were the sittings of the extraordinary judicial commission, sent out by the king to make up the long arrears of justice, and almost unbounded in its powers. Fléchier, not yet a bishop, but an obscure abbé in the train of one of the judges, reports, beside many singularities and traits of the province, the chief cases settled by the court, the upheaval of hopes and fears caused in the community by this sudden doomsday, the scurry of the tyrannical great lords and their struggles with the law, the summary but substantial redress of many ancient injuries. He is full of tales of intrigue, oppression, absurdity, and revenge. He is not free from antithetical rhetoric, and he is prone to relate sinister matters with a

distressing light urbanity. But his mind is detached, he is piquant, and he judges the tribunal itself and its results with equity. His portraits of its members are in sharp and malicious relief. The document¹ is precious, for no other of the time takes us so far from Paris, and reveals the living discords of the ancient *régime*.

The mass of the memoirs, which converge, as has been said, upon the king and the court, cannot strictly *Court memoirs*; be classified, even by dates. Some over-*feminine* lap from the preceding epoch, and comment only on the beginnings of the reign. Mme. de Motteville, the staid, clear-witted, devoted servant of Anne of Austria, is a faithful describer rather than a judge of the new order, or rather she judges it from the point of view of the old. Her valuable memoirs² are somewhat stifled by detail, and their style must have savoured of the older fashion to the generation that first read them. There is also the long chronicle of the flighty, generous Mlle. de Montpensier, "La Grande Mademoiselle," the king's cousin, and the refuser of the hands of many princes. Her serio-comic passages with Lauzun are most fully told by herself, as well as in a famous, if somewhat mannered, letter of Mme. de Sévigné. Among the women, two Attie writers have left their impressions of a later act of the drama. Mme. de la Fayette wrote a fragment on the years 1688-89, and a life of Henrietta of England, which have the same gravity, precision, and cunning irony as

¹ In MS. till 1844; see 2nd. ed. by Chéruel, 1862.

² First ed., Amsterdam, 1723.

the novels that are her masterpieces. The modest *Souvenirs* of Mme. de Caylus, the niece of Mme. de Maintenon, though she is less weighty in judgment and less awake to the broader politics than Mme. de la Fayette, are a most delicate study of the persons and gallantries of the court, and have a kind of perfume that is hardly to be found elsewhere. By the side of these writers, and most unlike them, is the Marquis de Dangeau, the naïf worthy chronicler of the king's daily doings from the year 1684 onwards. Dan-

and masculine; geau is a sound and necessary authority for *Choisy*.

the facts that he narrates, and he has the credit of having provoked, by the monotony of his hero-worship, no other than Saint-Simon to make the notes for his formidable work. The Maréchal de Villars, beginning to write in 1715, put together recollections, which, like his correspondence, are important for the military history of the time. The memoirs of the Abbé de Choisy, in his youth a strange masquerader and seeming *farceur*, contain the broadest range of personal portraits and the most significant and faithful anecdotes of any chronicle, and the traditional greatness of the king finds here the fullest witness. Choisy talks rather than composes; his easy, broken, rambling phrase discovers a sharp equity and accuracy of judgment.¹

¹ For memoirs see the great collections of Petitot and Monmerqué, second series, especially vols. 60-70, and of Michaud and Poujoulat. Dangeau, 19 vols., 1854, &c.; Mme. de Caylus, ed. Raunié, 1881; Choisy, ed. Lescure, 1888. See too bibliographies in Petit de Julleville, vol. v. ch. ix., by E. Bourgeois, for the memoirs, and by E. Trollet, ch. xi., for the letters.

Memoirs, letters, critical essays, and even verse, must be consulted in order to appreciate the groups of men and women whom their century *The "Libertines": La Fare.* called, with complex shades of suggestion, by the term of "libertines." Every one of them deserves, and nearly every one of them has received from Sainte-Beuve, a special chapter: none of the *Causeries* are happier, none juster, than those devoted to La Fare, to Lassay, to Maueroix, and the rest. These epicureans and free-thinkers embrace very distinct circles and temperaments. They have this much in common, that their free thought, unlike that of Bayle, is more an affair of conduct and temper than of learning and intellectual ardour. And all of them, taken together, preserve, in the age of *bien-séance* and classical repression, one of the most obstinate strains of the French character, that mingling of mental or practical licence, hostility or indifference to positive religion, and curious unbounded doubt, which comes down from Montaigne and Rabelais (whom Bossuet and the Church held to be the Fathers of the Church of Antichrist), and passes into full bloom with the schools of Diderot and Voltaire. The correspondence of Saint-Evremond, who had best be dealt with later as a critic, with Ninon de L'Enclos is one document of this kind. The letters of Ninon,¹ not very numerous now that the eighteenth-century forgeries are sifted away, are those of a great lady, of frank undeluded intellect, too clear of soul, when the life that she has chosen is drawing to an end, to

¹ *Corr. authentique*, ed. Colombey, 1886.

wish that it had ever been lived. The physician Guy¹ Patin, and the Marquis de Lassay, are older embodiments of the sceptical spirit. Maucroix, the translator and the friend of La Fontaine, and Vergier, another of his friends, use verse, often the irregular verse of their master; their scepticism, such as it is, is not of the fell and consequent sort, but a simple love of nature and enjoyment and wine and leisure. In the Marquis de la Fare, and the Abbé de Chaulieu his friend, the intellect is harder, the conclusions are driven further home. With La Fare's memoirs we glance back again to the critical histories of the reign and the king. He stands between Fénelon on one side and Saint-Simon on the other in the reasoned, if often unjust, rancour of his estrangement from the current idolatries. His prefatory pages are a hard-headed study on the absolute tendencies of French government, and his personal commentary corresponds. La Fare, a disappointed man, gave up his career and his courage, lost himself in idleness and orgy, and wasted a penetrating talent. Chaulieu saved a great deal more, though seemingly given over to trivialities; he lived till 1720, and his best writing is to be found in two or three sets of verses,² one of which portrays his own character, while others, addressed *À la Mort*, are in the gracefuller and even the nobler epicurean temper.

Bussy may serve for the link between memoirs and letters. Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy (1618-

¹ Ed. Réveillé-Parisé, 3 vols., 1846.

² See Poitevin, *Petits Poètes français*, 1864, vol. 2.

1693), spoilt, when already forty-seven years old, the promise of high military fortunes by his *Bussy-Rabutin*. *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*,¹ which is a detailed travesty of the court amours, cast in the form of a romance. It was a circumstantial and irritating work, and he was exiled to his estates for thirteen years. He was at last permitted to see the royal countenance, but his career was broken, and he retreated again to his estates. He wrote flattering memoirs, vainly designed to buy back the king's favour; and he occupies with supplications to the same end a goodly part of the large correspondence which forms his true credentials as a writer. The better though not the larger portion of the rest is addressed to his cousin, Mme. de Sévigné, whom he had wantonly libelled in his *Histoire*. She forgave Bussy repeatedly, and the tenacity of her friendship speaks in his favour. He was in the main a petrified creature, without gratitude or moral dignity. But he had a sound flinty judgment in affairs, in war, and in books, and he slowly fashioned himself into an accepted arbiter of wit and grace with a group of his friends. Part oracle, part martyr, part mendicant, he is carried farther by his reason than might be expected, as may be seen in his discerning praise of La Fontaine. He is unbeguiled by sensibility or preciosity, and his writing is very good. Among his correspondents are Bouhours and Rapin, again to be

¹ Liège, c. 1665 (current sooner). Many edd., as in *Bibl. Elzev.*, 4 vols., 1856, &c. *Mémoires*, ed. Lalanne, 2 vols., 1882. *Corresp.*, ed. Lalanne, 1858, 6 vols.

mentioned as critics ; but the most charming and unexpected of them is Mme. de Scudéry, the widow of Georges de Scudéry the versifier and romancer : her letters reveal a noble and delicate, if somewhat shadowed temper, that is not very commonly found outside of Port-Royal. There are letters extant also, very different, but far from merely "precious" or trivial, from Mlle. de Scudéry, the famous sister of Georges and leading accomplice in his work.

The correspondence of Mme. de Sévigné (1626-1696) registers from moment to moment the most vivid of *Mme. de Sévigné*, natures and the society of Paris during the latter part of the century. The writer, on one side, breathes the air of the mid-reign, and achieves its perfection of measure. But she is really of an older stock ; her favoured friends are Retz and La Rochefoucauld, and she keeps certain unconquerable qualities, which the atmosphere of Louis XIV. hardly encouraged, of gay frankness and inalienable freedom of judgment. Her life was one of many privations to the soul and affections ; her nature and temper triumphed over everything, and she wrote herself down, which few have been happy enough to do, completely. Marie de Rabutin-Chantal was left an orphan very early, but was generously and well instructed. She read Latin and Italian, and gained more than an inkling of the Cartesian philosophy. In early youth she had some experience of the court of Anne of Austria, and also of the society of the "precious." She married a waster of good descent, Henri, Marquis de Sévigné, and was at twenty-five left a widow, with

a son who was but half-satisfactory, and a daughter, afterwards Mme. de Grignan, who was a little stony, though not so unworthy as has sometimes been pretended of the passion that her mother poured out upon her in her incomparable chronicle of letters. Mme. de Sévigné, though beautiful, never remarried, and never turned to gallantry, but lived mainly in Paris, in full sight and hearing of everything that passed. She was sought and esteemed, and she enjoyed the safety and self-respect that are denied to the prudish. It is one of the honours of the world of Mme. de Montespan, of the world described and libelled by Bussy-Rabutin, that it behaved well to Mme. de Sévigné, who was so much and yet so little of it. Court for court, can we think that an English Mme. de Sévigné would have had a like reception, or could have risked her dignity in the presence of Barbara Palmer and Rochester? Sometimes she retired to her Breton house, Les Rochers, and consoled herself for ill health, or for the distance or failings of those whom she loved, by an exquisite, if fitful, enjoyment of nature, which is very rare in her time. As age approached she kept more and more away from Paris. Her chief occupation was correspondence. She began to write to Bussy and other friends very early in the forties—some of her brightest letters date from the first years of the reign; but they are not so wholly natural and perfect as her epistolary diary to her daughter, which begins with Mme. de Grignan's marriage in 1669, and is almost unbroken. This was carefully kept and published, in issues

gradually less imperfect, during the eighteenth century. The first instalment appeared in the memoirs of Bussy, the year (1697) after Mme. de Sévigné died.¹

The labour and coercion of art, which are second nature with the other great classics of the time, are by felicity of nature absent in Mme. de Sévigné, and unnecessary. Her pen is swift and impetuous; nothing comes between her and whatever she describes, and her style is in complete adjustment to everything that can be told in a letter—a dialogue, a scandal, a journey, an interview, an opinion. It is told in a single gush or spurt of narrative by the freest and justest of wits. Her fifteen hundred and more letters are a whole literature. Their passion of tenderness for her daughter is noble in its excess, in its chagrins and piques and recoveries. The feminine gift of seeing actual life faithfully in its minute sparkle and play, and of judging humours and characters directly, has seldom been so great, and has never been so swiftly and surely realised in words. If pedantry were not eternal, one might feel, after Mme. de Sévigné, that it is irrecoverable. Her invincible fidelity of insight, her occasional depth of weariness, rank her near La Fontaine and Molière in their exceptional moments. But, as a rule, she is of her time: at moments she *is* the time itself, in its form and pressure.

¹ *G. E. F.*, 16 vols., ed. Monmerqué and (2 latter vols.) Capmas; *Lettres choisies* (Garnier). Monographs by G. Boissier, in *Grands Écrivains français*, last ed. 1896, and R. Valléry-Radot in *Class. populaires*, 1894; *Encyc. Brit.*, ed. ix. (art. by G. Saintsbury).

There remains one great letter-writer and great personage—Mme. de Maintenon (1635-1717). We

Mme. de Main- cannot discuss her surprising fortunes, or
tenon.

the enigmas, political and personal, that still surround them; but her writing is the hueless flower of classicism, grown in the air of the court, and ripening into fruit that is perhaps nourishing, but has little savour. Françoise d'Anbigné, the granddaughter of the famous Protestant satirist, had little enough of his flame and impetus; but a certain bareness and rectitude that in England might have been called puritan are hers, and her character has also a touch of hidden mysticism which she perhaps succeeded in eradicating. She was brought up in bitter penury; she has none of the spare gaiety or the outrush of sensibility that belong to Mme. de Sévigné. She became, by compulsion but sincerely, a Catholic; accepted, at her wits' end, the title of wife to the suffering burlesque writer, Scarron, who was kindly and respectful to her and opened up to her the great world and good conversation. In 1660 she was left a widow with poor resources, and struggled for nine years more. Then she became governess to the children that the king had had by Mme. de Montespan, so long the favourite;—to the *king's* children, as she insisted with characteristic fineness, and not to those of Mme. de Montespan. After a long struggle, written down in all the memoirs of the time, she at last saw that lady evicted. In 1675 she received the estates of Maintenon and the title of marquise. Her private marriage with the king in 1684 was a pro-

found cause or symptom of the whole change in the court atmosphere and pose, and was not without its influence—though to what extent is disputed—on the fates of the Huguenots, and of the Church in its political relations with the Crown. Her letters¹ become fuller after this period, but not less guarded; they must be read without the falsifications of the ingenious La Beaumelle, who published them in the eighteenth century. They are the pattern of easy discretion and rightness, and have every grace of sobriety and adequacy. They show a sincere lack of ambition for the destiny that fell to her, and a desire to receive the guidance, in her difficult plight, of some religious master. But, in her own despite, the sense of reality and her own character that distinguishes Mme. de Maintenon forced her back into mental independence. She eludes the wonderful and tyrannous strategy of Fénelon, and relegates the commonplace Abbé Gobelin, to whom she speaks less freely as soon as she finds that her greatness frightens him. At last she is only happy in her natural work of directing and organising others. Mme. de Maintenon is famous as an educator, and found refuge from her task of converting and consoling Louis XIV. in founding the institution of Saint-Cyr for the education, chiefly religious, of young girls from the gentle class. The bulk of her remaining works and letters are

¹ Ed. Lavallée, 1854, &c., 8 vols. (general letters, 4 vols.; educational, 4 vols.); corrections in Geffroy, *Mme. de M. d'après sa Corr. authentique*, 1887, 2 vols. See Gréard, *Extraits*, 1885 (Hachette), and his introduction.

addressed to her flock at Saint-Cyr; and here was her true home and reign. There are many virtues in her programme and in the writings by which she advanced it. Tact, adjustment, sense of character, the fortunate mean, are there; style is there, grace is there. Nothing is absent except the glory of life and youth, and “the freedom of the natural soul.”

The list would be over-swollen if the names were added—not only of the great writers like Fénelon *Literary worth of the Letters.* and La Fontaine, whose letters are of the first rank, but of those whose only bequest is their letters. There is no end to the enumeration of the women that come under this class, from Louise de la Vallière to the sister of Pascal, and, again, to Mme. de Montmorency, the sharp-edged correspondent of Bussy. There is more real writing, it may be fairly said, in the French collections of letters written during this half-century than in the whole production of some of the smaller countries like German or French Switzerland. There has never been such a record of mutual scrutiny directed by intelligent people who are capable with the pen. The Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of the time wrote incessantly to one another, for one another, about one another, and at one another's expense. The measure in which a certain style, that we call classical, invaded life and talk as well as formal literature, is best understood from these documents. The arid-seeming canons of Boileau and the other critics, *Be simple, Follow nature, Let good sense rule*, take on life and meaning when we see them more or less realised by

a mass of persons¹ who are writing off their guard, and without complicity; priests, soldiers, courtiers, painters, and women of all shades of morals and instruction. The correspondence of Swift and his friends, in some ways the nearest equivalent in English, must be multiplied fifty-fold in order to give an idea of the epistolary riches of France. And the qualities of style are the same as those that rule in speculative or homiletic writing; they are sureness, clearness, ease, weight, and scruple.

The essence of all such records and memoirs is almost concentrated in one man. Like Butler, Jean

de la Bruyère (1645-1696) won and rested
La Bruyère: his fame on a single book, published in mature life; a sheaf of arrowy traits picked up and privily sharpened during the obscure days of a dependent. But the scene and atmosphere in which he lived gave him a greater precision and clearer breadth of view than Butler's, just as they made his style more durable and monumental. In 1684 he was taken, at the instance of Bossuet, into the house of the Prince de Condé, as teacher to his son, the Duc de Bourbon, and there he stayed to the last. In 1688 came out his translation of the *Characters* of Theophrastus, *avec les Caractères ou les Mœurs de ce siècle*.² He entered the Academy in 1693, three years before his death, and his inaugural oration remains. It was

¹ Best shown in G. Lanson, *Choix de Lettres du xvii^e Siècle*, Hachette, 1895. For the *Lettres portugaises*, see p. 412 *post*.

² Eight eds. with great changes and accretions in La Bruyère's lifetime. *G. E. F.*, 3 vols., ed. Servois. *Caractères*, many modern eds.: "ed. classique," by Rebbliau (Hachette), 1896.

not for nothing that he was chosen by Bossuet. He wrote *Dialogues sur le Quiétisme*; and he has, in his chapter *Sur les Esprits forts* (which has been ill taken as a confused testimonial to his own orthodoxy in case of need), many a trait of Pascal, and of Bossuet when Bossuet follows Pascal, as well as many a trait of the odd sceptical faltering that carries him onward to Bayle. He has also the honesty, the directness, the hatred of the “faux dévot,” that make him, equally with his gift of tracing character, a fellow of Molière; and the Jansenist tone is to be seen in the austerity of his whole reference to character and the world. La Bruyère is at first sight less of a wit and observer than an upright honourable soul, irritated by the world, which attracts him as intellectual pasture, and of the Court, which like an Elizabethan poet he ravages with analysis, yet cannot do without. He is the last writer of this age who has the fulness, or something past the fulness, of its literary gift, and at the same time something of the wide-eyed melancholy of the earlier men. We are out of the air of the Court when he tells us of old men that “ils ont eu un songe confus, informe, et sans aucun suite; ils sentent, néanmoins, comme ceux qui s’éveillent, qu’ils ont dormi longtemps.” His sayings upon great men, upon the city, upon women, are, despite their studious carving, personal; there is chagrin in them, and a manly bitterness that is not small or cynical. The writer has made sacrifices, and knows what are the things that weigh. At other times he

has a vein of daylight good sense that borders on the commonplace, and infects even his language.

His book is thrown, not altogether artificially, into chapters, upon *Les Ouvrages de l'Esprit*, personal

The merit, women, the court, the king, man-
Caractères. kind, fashion, and many other things. Each of these chapters is a fascicle of remarks, not very coherent, and embodying prolonged or briefer "characters." This literary form derives not only from the Greek, but from the fashionable romances of the Scudérys and others.¹ It had already become detached from the setting of fiction, as a pastime of compliment or a means of annoyance, and generally referred to a living friend or enemy. But La Bruyère's portraits stand far above all similar attempts in any modern language, and, in their careful congruity and laboured distinctness, above those of Theophrastus. They contain the material for comic personages, just as his sentences sometimes contain the scheme of a comic situation. "Sometimes a woman hides from a man the passion that she feels for him, while on his side he feigns for her a passion that he has not got." Here the playwright has his material for a plot at once. The "character-portraits" of Lise, or of Glycère, or of Onuphre (who is a variant on Tartuffe), or of a hundred others, to whom the interpreters of the time were ready to attach actual names, are the

¹ Cp. the *Divers Portraits* (1659) by "La Grande Mademoiselle" and her company, which exhibit Charles II., Queen Christina, Mme de Sévigné, and many others.

complete staff of serious high comedy. The *Caractères* are informed with a kind of scientific hunger for the facts of human character, and for a positive summary way of presenting them. La Bruyère's literary ideal is to be plain and final, like the ancients; to repeat, as well as may be, what the ancients have said already, which is everything. He also seems to have been the first to phrase clearly the fancy of *le mot propre*, *le mot unique*, which is the dream of the literary artist, his harmless and noble illusion in the quest of verbal perfection. For every idea there is *one* rightful expression, and the writer feels, says La Bruyère, that "everything which is not that, is weak." This is an aspiration of classicism: it is the prose counterfoil of that which haunted the Renaissance poet, who felt that even when all is won by the masters of expression—

"Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least
Which into words no virtue can digest."

La Bruyère shows signs of effort in his own language, though of a noble effort. He is ample in resource of words, and is in command both of the short jewelled phrase, which the French language almost gives him ready-made, and of the long-breathed period, which he carries through with startling oratorical dexterity. One of his commoner devices is to concentrate the venom in the tail of the sentence, without previous warning or emphasis.

Few French writers before Voltaire have more sharpness; but though his art is very great, the final impression, as with Swift, is an impression less of art than of character.

The literature of invention and fancy has now insensibly been reached. For the Character comes to *Romancing* be more often a selection of traits than *memoirs.* a transcript of a whole person; and letters and memoir, in default of any true historical conscience, slip easily into romance. The reign of Louis XIV. teemed with records pretending to a scandalous veracity. Bussy's *Histoire amoureuse* had a train of parasitical imitations. Fiction, which rounds off an old man's memory of his gallant experiences, also plays its part in the famous *Mémoires du Chevalier de Grammont*¹ (1713), which describe the early years of the Restoration court in England, and were written down long after by Grammont's showman and brother-in-law, Anthony Hamilton. This loyalist Scot, born in Ireland, reared and naturalised in France, exported at the Restoration, repatriated in France at the Revolution, links the two nations in the reverse manner to Saint-Evremond. He is a bad witness either for or against character, as well as in matters of fact; but his report of manners and conversation, seasoned with a light insolent elegance and with a certitude of malicious point, is confirmed by much scattered evidence. The French critics acclaim Hamilton as a classic in his own

¹ Ed. Lesenre (1876), and often. Eng. tr. 1714; and Scott's ed. (Bohn), often reissued. For Hamilton, see *post*, p. 87. *Œuvres*, 3 vols., 1812.

species; and his subject makes the fullest demands on the nice and impeccable wickedness of his narrative style. The *Mémoires de M. d'Artagnan* (1700), a book beloved of Hugo, come to us as edited by a profuse, dubious hack-writer, Gatien Courtilz de Sandras; but the hot breath of actual life and speech remains in the figure of the musketeer. There are traits of crude intrepid rascality, fits of decent loyalty and rueful reflection, and passages of encounter with Mazarin and "Milady," which go beyond the scope of Dumas (the great transformer and melodramatiser of the book), and which only Fielding could have preserved.

The classical period marks a consummation in fiction and romance, rather than a true beginning; the new life of romance is opened by Lesage, who is deferred to the next volume. Neither do we relate the death of the old mammoth school of fiction, with its leisurely psychology, its intellectual erotics, and its strain of noble punctilio. The last long romance of great note, the *Cécile*, was completed in 1660, though its authoress, Mlle. de Scudéry, lived forty years longer. But the relish for these works, whose true worth and service are not now underestimated, long outlived both their production and the dismissal in form that was given them by classical satire. *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659) preceded Boileau's delightful *Dialogue des Héros de Roman*, which was circulated about 1665, but kept from print by the author—though it appeared as a piracy—during the lifetime of Mlle. de Scudéry. Smaller romancers, indeed, continued to produce,

The life-in-death of the old romances.

though their day was done.¹ Yet the allegiance of Mme. de Sévigné to La Calprenède, of La Fontaine to D'Urfé and the rest, is as sound as that of Dorothy Osborne, Lady Temple, to the like authors, and of later Englishwomen to Richardson. The *Traité* of Bishop Huet on the romances, issued with the *Zayde* of Mme. de la Fayette, is a learned and admiring *apologia* for the older novels. They were the treasury of plot and sentiment for the English heroic play, and were devoured late in the century in Germany and Italy. Their mainspring, the conception of heroic love, is appropriated by a writer who overshadowed them all, gave them compass, manageable form, truth to humanity, and the framework of real history; and who applied an astringent reason to their methods.

Reason, indeed, according to her friends, was the ruling principle in Mme. de la Fayette² (1634-1692),

Mme. de la Fayette. born Marie Pioche de la Vergne, whose historical memoirs have already been named.

Her life contains some unsolved matters, not the least of which is her activity, only discovered in 1880,³ as a diplomatic agent between Louvois and the house

¹ For Vaumorière, the Abbé d'Aubignac, and other survivors, see the sound and full monograph of P. H. Kœrting, *Geschichte des französischen Romans im xvii. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1891, 2nd edition, vol. i. pt. ii. ch. viii.

² *Œuvres complètes de Mmes. de la Fayette, de Tencin, et de Fontaines*, 1825, vols. i.-iii. Her novels in many reprints — e.g., Garnier's; Huet's *Traité* often with them. For disputed chronology see Kœrting, *op. cit.*, vol. i. chap. last.

³ By M. Perrero, *Lettre inédite di Madama di La Fayette*, Turin, 1880. For the severe view see Arvède Barine in *Revue des deux Mondes*, 15th Sept. 1880.

of Savoy; and this has been harshly taken to reflect on the integrity and directness for which she was honoured. Further, her husband, whom she married at twenty-five, vanished early from her life for some unknown reason, and survived in the country, while his wife was recognised in Paris for wit, talk, intellect, and style. Her union of mind and amity with La Rochefoucauld seems to have rested on a certain common stoicism, much schooled and ennobled by hard experience. The "reason" of Mme. de la Fayette is a little embittered and detached, and prefers to explore the subtleties, even the fatalities, of tragical passion. And her "reason" is also a conscience, with a kind of Jansenist touch, regarding the tragic environment as a school of virtue and sacrifice. But her conscience does not lead her to pervert or hurry the nice perception of every step and incident, which receives its natural value.

Such a mind is keen rather than gay, and a grave clouded irony, rather than humour, is the tone of Mme. de la Fayette. Of her four novels, only the second and longest, *Zayde* (1670), is involved with the rusty wheelwork of the novel of adventure. This, as in its Spanish type, depends too much on a breathless gallop of incidents that will not bear inspection. But *Zayde* is carefully conducted, and has interspaces of pretty idyll which are absent from Mme. de la Fayette's other tales. The lovers, one French and the other Greek, who understand and misunderstand one another by signs, and on meeting after an absence accost one another in the tongues they have studied

meanwhile, are a little of the pastoral kind. But the episode of Alphonse and Belasire is a dissection of insane and fatal jealousy, and prefigures sterner gifts. The book came out under the name of Segrais, who might have helped in its prolixities. *La Princesse de Montpensier* (1662), the brief first essay of the authoress, was not signed, and Segrais for a little time also had the credit of *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678, written some years sooner), into which Mme. de la Fayette put all her power and experience. *La Comtesse de Tende* is a short afterpiece, written partly as an *apologia pro libro suo*, and shows unabated strength.

La Princesse de Clèves, like its briefer companions, ✓
 is a historical novel of intrigue, the scene being
 the court of Henry II. of France, and
 the tone of the impartial memoir being
 preserved. The subject is the love of the married Princess and the Duc de Nemours; its beginnings, the pressure of routine and circumstance that nurtures it, the honourable resistance of the princess, her final avowal to her husband, and her virtuous death. The iron mesh of events is woven without a single lax link, and the story is told at first sight rather cold-bloodedly, but really with a melancholy aloofness. The passions of her puppets are as things of the past to Mme. de la Fayette. It might be possible, as it is sometimes possible in George Sand, to resent a certain motherly and elderly tone that she takes with her young people. But it would be hard to find another fault, and there is nothing precisely to compare in English, or perhaps in any language, with this reserved and perfect chronicle.

The framework adopted by Mme. de la Fayette, of the personal history of a court of France, saved so much trouble to inferior workmen, and admitted of such constant innuendo and allusion to the greatest court of all, that we are not surprised to hear of a mass of works with the same brand. There are, says M. Morillot, “une prodigieuse quantité de monographies galantes sur tel ou tel personnage marquant de la cour des Capétiens, des Valois, ou des Bourbons, notamment sur le Comte de Dunois, Marie de Bourgogne, Marguerite de Valois,” and others. And to these is added a bulk of exotic romances, African, Spanish, Moorish in subject and pretended atmosphere, none of which have survived in literature. All these things¹ were soon to lose even the ghostly existence they preserve in travesties, and to give way to the forms of the eighteenth century—the philosophical tale, the novel of sensibility.

But the double strain that runs through all French literature is reflected in seventeenth-century fiction.

Realism: The contrast of Benoit de Saint-Maur and *Fureticre.* Rutebenf, of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, of George Sand and Balzac, of the lyrical, gracious, chivalrous spirit with the sardonic, photographic spirit, of romance and realism in their many shapes,—this contrast is essential in all French art and

¹ See Morillot in Petit de Julleville, and also in the charming prefatory notes of his book of extracts, *Le Roman en France depuis 1610 jusqu'à nos jours*. For this obsolete fiction I have had to rely upon the historians.

character. It is everywhere in mediæval, and to an obvious extent in all literature; but it is peculiarly French, and from it derive much of the power, the range, the ever-renewed clashes and harmonies of the national genius. It is also part of the story that the naturalistic strain usually begins as a protest, and often as a parody, at the expense of a school of romance which has run its course and requires the check of reality. This is especially true in fiction. Only one writer, belonging to the full classical age, is to be noted here; and Antoine Furetière (1620-1688), like Mme. de la Fayette in her different region, does not so much open a new movement as finally accomplish an old one. He seals by his style a kind that, however buoyant and vigorous, was in danger of perishing. The various burlesques by Charles Sorel (*Francion*, 1622) and Scarron (*Le Roman comique*,¹ 1652, 1657) are, much more than the fantasies of Cyrano, in the ancestry of Furetière. But Scarron, plentiful in gaiety, did not live into the classical age. And the first novelist that really caught the vision of vulgar citizen life, and the passion for satiric veracity in presenting it, and who also breathed the air of Boileau and La Fontaine, was their friend and ally. His chief work, *Le Roman bourgeois*, was published in 1666, when the sap of the revolt was rising; and it opens with a direct proclamation of citizen life as the theme, in antidote to the heroic romance. Furetière's essays in satire, earlier and later, are flimsy. He attempted an allegorical fiction in prose (*Nouvelle allégor-*

¹ Ed. V. Fournel, 1857.

ique, 1658), relating the conflict of true Rhetoric with the "Galimatias" of romance; *Le Voyage de Mercure*, in short rhymes, oddly like Butler's smaller satires; and some versified *Fables et Nouvelles* (1671) which reveal his neat-handed malice, but no poetry. His feud with the Academy and his invaluable dictionary of the French language will be named again (p. 152 *post*).

The construction in *Le Roman bourgeois* is very ragged, and some of the humour is spiteful, personal, and hard. But the overture is worthy of *Le Roman Bourgeois*. a great novel; the stir and humours are delineated of a grotesque throng, flirting and alms-begging at the church in the Place Maubert. The domestic interior of Vollichon, the shady lawyer, and Javotte his daughter, is like a page of Dickens, down to his exaggerations. Furetière's wit is legal rather than genial, and legal wit is not always very fresh to the lay apprehension. But the *Épître amoureuse* of Bedout, the solemn gull of the story, stands not far from that of Mr Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Furetière's mock dedication to the hangman, "maître des hautes œuvres," has a wider irony than the rest of his writing.¹

The tale or *conte* is to this ample, crowded, and *The conte*: positive fiction as the small wild berry, *Perrault*. flourishing age-long by the wayside, is to the cultivated. Yet the highest art is not too much

¹ For the pettier companions of Furetière, like Perdou de Sabigny, the author of *La fausse Clélie* (1670), and Claude le Petit, whose *L'Heure du Berger* is dated 1661, see Keating, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. ch. x. *Le Roman bourgeois*, often reprinted, as by P. Jannet, 1868, and E. Colombey, 1880; the other works seemingly not.

to carry the *conte* to the utmost of its proper perfection. French literature at this time had few inspirations that were truly popular, or truly mediæval, or truly Eastern. The exceptions are chiefly in the *conte*. Anthony Hamilton, in his quasi-oriental stories, caught none of the graver or more poignant tones of the East, and his gaiety is rather a thin vintage. But *Fleur d'Épine* and *Le Bélier* are pleasing enough, and though void of philosophy foretold by their manner the *conte philosophique* of the next century. The *Contes des Fées*, or *Contes de ma Mère L'Oye* (1696-1697)¹ of Charles Perrault,² also in prose, are eight or ten of the oldest and most genuine of popular tales, gathered from first-hand sources, Breton and other, and told with the precise charm of prosaic simplicity that is exacted by children. This was Perrault's knack, and it is a rare one; he got himself out of the way, being otherwise a person of most mediocre talent, and he yet managed to attach his own fame for good to the stories of *Barbe bleue*, *Riquet à la Houppe*, *Cendrillon*, and the rest. His work has been very often reprinted and translated, and was much imitated. The admirable version of the *Mille et une Nuits* by the learned and travelled professor of Arabic, Antoine Galland (1704-1717), increased the appetite for stories, and holds its own among translations. But the impulse

¹ First in Moetjens's *Recueil*, at The Hague, in instalments; in book form, Paris, 1697, as *Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé, avec des Moralités*. (The verse tales, *Grisélidis*, &c., earlier.) For lore, and references to the modern eds. (Lacroix, 1876, &c.), see A. Lang, *Perrault's Popular Tales*, Oxford, 1888.

² For Perrault as critic, see below, p. 147.

of the time, and perhaps the foolish pride of reason, still told against the recovery of the primitive strain in story-telling.

The *conte* (1665-1695) in the hands of La Fontaine is the versified treatment of a gay story, mediæval rather than classical. His profuse aggravations of Boccaccio and others have plenty of cynical vigour if no charm, and are very unequal in workmanship. In many of them the luxury is a cold affair and the dogged quest of innuendo dies off in weariness, while sometimes the very finest craft is expended in quickening the hoary and battered life of an anecdote like *La Matrone d'Ephèse*. His long romance of *Psyché* is told in a rallying and gallant tone that withers the old story to the complexion of a *conte*. Antoine de Sénece (1643-1737) would seem to be the brightest of La Fontaine's followers in these fields.

A chief artist of France, and better gifted with the senses of the poet than any Frenchman of his time, *La Fontaine's* Jean de la Fontaine¹ (1621-1695) has been *career.* plausibly rebuked both by Rousseau and by recent historians, not only for the *Contes*, but for a strangely selfish and parasitical career. He was born at Chateau-Thierry, in Champagne, and lived there long, easily, and idly, with a brief spell of legal, and even of clerical studies. He had reached Paris in 1657, deserting or ignoring his wife and child, and was introduced to his first patron, Fouquet, after whose fall he found other patrons. All his life he was the guest

¹ *G. E. F.*, 11 vols., ed. Mesnard; the older editions and biographies by Walekenaer; Taine, *La Fontaine et ses Fables*, 1853, &c.

and pensioner of eminent persons, and for some twenty years he was in the house of Mme. de la Sablière. His friends were, on one side, the three great writers, Racine, Boileau, Molière, and on the other, the throng of "libertines" and miscellaneous poets of his own turn of mind. His life was naïvely irregular, even for the time, and his amours seem to have had little to do with the strain of poetry in his composition. He has no sense of not being inwardly at one; there is none of the rankling conscience that at moments seems to weigh on Molière. His simple-mindedness, some of which is legendary, did not exclude endless malice and finesse of observation. He followed instinct; and in his last three years he gave way to a revulsion of instinct against his own paganism, and died an exemplary believer.

This life, often, alas! undignified enough, of changing dependences, imprinted a profound experience in La Fontaine. He was the client of personages and kings' favourites, he was the friend of the new poets and the courtiers, and he came to have his own vision—none keener—of the close troubling atmosphere where the greater creatures are surrounded by others who are successively smaller. Whatever his errors of conduct, he was never subdued to what he saw and heard. His complimentary verse to royalty is conventional; his view of the great imposing hierarchy, that took itself so seriously, is independent. He stands between La Bruyère and Molière, working by a different method, and in some ways with freer colours. Deep in La Fontaine is the deposit of dis-

*His view of the
social order*

trust for all that magnificence. He is its critic, for he has ground to stand on of his own; and it is nothing short of nature at large, and the open world, that support him, and he sees the little brilliances of society in their just proportion and with unalterable insight. And, at the same time, he has learnt much that the charmed circle has to teach, its urbanity, its use of words, its art. He has learnt, and he uses to judge his teachers, their lesson of disenchanted good sense, of which his poems are in turn a store. His tales have always been successfully submitted to children, and it would be idle, in the case of many of them, to find more matter than a child may understand, or more than a platitude with which the author idly plays himself. But in many there is the clear expression of a singular strong mind, hard to describe in the endless freedom of its delicate play.

La Fontaine is undoubtedly, being in the line of Montaigne and of the circle of La Fare, a sceptic. He

And of life. might fantastically be compared to one of the slender little creatures in his own stories, going after its appetites without dignity and also without prejudice to its keenness of scent and other perspicacities, and gnawing subtly at the tense net of accepted beliefs and arrangements. The ninth book of the *Fables*¹ contains several comments on the more complacent kind of theology. In *The Sculptor and the Statue of Jove*, the "godsmith," to use a word of Dryden's, is the first to shudder at his own creatures, and becomes like a child who is anxious

¹ *Fables*, 1668, 1678, 1692, in successive instalments.

that its doll shall not be offended. The intention of *The Acorn and the Gourd* is Voltairian, though there is a double edge to the story. It is like a chapter of *Candide*. The peasant, who had impugned the divine adjustments because the gourds grew on such slender stalks, is reconciled, and finds his theodicy when the acorn falls on his face; for had it been a gourd he had been killed. The fable *Rien de Trop* is a picture of universal excess, only rectified by a universal war of extermination. The sheep crop down the rank pastures, but do so more destructively than they ought; the wolves do the like by the sheep, and then the men by the wolves, "overdoing the divine orders." Life, thus regarded, presents a picture of voracities that are adapted to punish one another, and becomes discouraging. The one thing stable and eternal in it all is certain natural ranks, and these are frankly determined by strength and cunning; disaster attends those who neglect these fixed distinctions, which do not rest on any harmony of strength with goodness or justice. We cannot wonder that Rousseau and some other eighteenth-century thinkers denounced this picture, and made La Fontaine out to be a teacher of immorality. He merely exhibits it. If we ask him where true satisfaction is to be found, he seems to have a twofold reply. The humble, the retired, and the simple are often the prey of the others; but in the main they are out of the way, they have more peace, they live amidst nature, and something like theirs may be the lot of the wise,—a conclusion

coming near Rousseau's after all. Secondly, there is the human, or animal, comedy, which is always interesting and amusing. The collision of violence with violence or craft, or of craft with folly, or of different degrees of folly with one another; all ends commonly at the expense of folly, and in favour, if not of those who are good, at least of those who are serious. For oneself, the best thing, next to attendance on these spectacles, is personal enjoyment. La Fontaine is severe on the Stoical, Jansenist austerities of habit; they "take away the chief spring from our lives, and stop them before we are dead." And death! How the poetry and irony of it come home at times to the pagan! He is very serious; his extreme meets that of Bossuet.

"Quittez le long espoir et les vastes pensées,"

the young men say to the old, who after all outlive them. And again, he exclaims to the dying—

"Plus de goût, plus d'ouïe;
Toute chose pour toi semble être évanouie;
Pour toi l'astre du jour prend des soins superflus."

And suddenly, at the end of *Le Rieur et les Poissons*, the jester receives for his portion at dinner—

"Un monstre assez vieux pour lui dire
Tous les noms des chercheurs de mondes inconnus
Qui n'en étaient pas revenus,
*Et que depuis cent ans sous l'abîme avaient vus
Les anciens du vaste empire.*"

What other poet of the same date, in verse or prose, in any country, can send a Shakespearian flash into the depths of Time and the ocean?

To render such a peculiar unfettered vision, sometimes mean in its counsels of prudence, sometimes

The fable far-seeing and formidable, what literary
form. form should La Fontaine employ? The

madrigals and thin modish lyrics with which he had begun were insufficient. He practised the drama, but comparatively without address. He wrote epistles and much else, but was drawn between the competing kinds of the *Conte* and the Fable. But the Fable gave him a truer framework: it also had for him a double attraction. In the first place, the kingdom of beasts furnished something more than a ready-made world of figure for the kingdom of men, as we have seen that La Fontaine perceived it. It was actually that same kingdom, living and continued downwards, but picturesque and simplified. The fixing of natural ranks by the degree of strength and cunning born in them is there quite frank and definite. It only remains to add to animals the speech of men, in order to embody in them his distinctive ambitions and hypocrisies. This of course has been the attitude of all serious fabulists. But La Fontaine excels by reason of his poetical sympathy with the world of realities that are chosen as images. He is sensible to storm and flood, with their symbolism of empty violence; to landscape and garden; to the buds of the fruit-trees, "douce et frêle

espérance"; to the plot of "seanty jessamine and wild thyme thick," growing

"De quoi faire à Margot pour sa fête un bouquet"—

above all, to the whole pathos and appeal of young creatures, *dulces in pumice nidi*, the cherished eggs of the eagle, or the lion's cubs: this motive comes again and again in his verses. His natural history, or rather his artistic perception of the brutes, is full of just sentiment, of description as vivid as Rabelais' picture of the dog with the bone. The lion "maimed by age," the weasel "with the slender corsage," the satyr and his young, who live at ease, carpetless and sheetless, but with a good appetite,—amongst these personages La Fontaine can think and move happily, enjoying them for their own sake, without allegory. His art consists in presenting them without falsification or effort, as a pattern of our world, and in thus filling in with life and feature the traditional form, after all a little arid, of the animal fable. In his ten books there is every shade of seriousness; it is a mistake to consider too deeply half his stories; but he always prevails by his perfection in structure and rhythm, which are his own and remain so.

La Fontaine's form ripples with ease and life, and though vagrant on the face of it, is moulded by a difficult and cunning culture of felicity.

His styles.

The constructions of the fable may be longer than those of a lyric, because the emotional pitch is lower; yet they suffer the limits that are

imposed on us by our powers of attention to an anecdote. But it is in La Fontaine that French classicism surpasses itself, for all symmetries and laws from without are ignored as unnecessary, so strong is the instinct of scale, of modulation, of clearing away the dull and inorganic. La Fontaine cannot be called a Hellenist with any strictness; yet his tales touch on their more gracious side the Sicilian idyll, and on their more sonorous and solemn one the ode or chorus, and their wit always has grace. The only part that is sometimes unassimilated is the moral; but this is added, ingrafted, or implied, with the utmost ease. The diction is notably free, unacademic, colloquial, full of old ringing words and forms, which La Fontaine's countrymen feel only make it more harmonious. The rhythms are very various. Sometimes concise and regular, they seem to achieve most when they are broken and technically irresponsible. The thirty-two lines of *Le Chêne et le Roseau*, or the longer *Les deux Pigeons*, strike the foreign ear (which may so easily err) as the consummation of a literary kind—that is, as brief pieces of concerted metre. The habitual interspersion of shorter lines amongst the long gives the same kind of relief, in a more familiar key, as it does in the *canzone*. It is known that La Fontaine took great pains to win these effects of happy chance: the best of his things sound as though spoken and improvised. Hence the novelty of his old tales, which he seldom invented, but took from pseudo-classic or Eastern

collections, or from Phædrus, or from hearsay, or from life.

There is nothing in France that answers in quality to the Restoration songs of Rochester and his band. Lyric, in the true sense, is *Substitutes for lyric poetry.* notoriously, like history, wanting. It would be out of scale to dwell upon the writers who stand as a kind of exception to this sentence. There is something vehement and real in the love-odes of the Comtesse de la Suze; there is ease and shallow grace in the poems of Mme. Deshoulières (1638-1694), which vary from lengthy epistles to her friend Fléchier and other persons of quality, to short rapid lyrics, one or two of which have the old French gaiety of spring and song, while a few others are malicious and effective. The ditties of the Abbé Chaulieu, the friend of La Fare and the free-thinkers, may again be praised, and there is a touch of the choicer part of La Fontaine in the gentle verses of his friend Maucroix. The ballet ditties of Isaac de Benserade, served up at the royal entertainments, more than answered their purpose. The choruses in Racine are simply eloquence, though real eloquence, very carefully pitched and finished, and trying to be poetry. In the profane kind, the lyric of Quinault and others in the operas sometimes deserves the same credit. France, the country of Villon, Du Bellay, La Fontaine, and Hugo, has been blindly denied the genius of lyric by some judges. The condemnation may be true, though not totally, of the classical age. What influences, dating from Malherbe, and greatly

chargeable to Malherbe himself, had told for the refrigeration of French lyric,¹ may be clearer by contrast with the classical verse of England.

English verse, as the fourth chapter will show, was partly a *revival*; it was a reluming of the fires scattered, or covered, or spent during the exile.

*Verse and
prose inter-
changeable.*

It was a return to Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Chaucer. Hence, in England, metre was slower to part with its true function, which is to inform a mood of higher passion than is commonly permitted to prose. But, as the new age advanced, verse and prose came to be alternative forms, for saying very much the same kind of thing, in the same tones, about the same world. This confusion of realms is a sign of classicism. And if it was, for various reasons,—chiefly because of the strength of the surviving flame of poetry,—delayed in England, it was much less delayed in France, where the preceding age, though full of power and masterful vehemence, was not—apart from Corneille—especially *poetical*. Hence, in the full classical age of France, the province and perfections of prose and of verse tend to be the same. The prose of Molière, where he is perhaps more himself than in his verse, is not pitched far below it; the verse of Racine, himself much influenced by Molière, often, in its wide variety, becomes stripped, bare, and direct, like his admirable prose. He is also full of argument, as La Fontaine is of maxim. But maxim and argument are properly things for prose. Conversely, that essential heat of feeling, which calls for the

¹ Poitevin, *Petits Poètes français*, 2 vols.

mingled check and exaltation that are given by verse, often takes wing to the serious masters of prose, Bossuet, Malebranche, or even Fléchier. But, on the whole, this kind of feeling is rare in classicism. So that the general bent is not to let prose do the work of poetry, but to use metre for ends that are secondary to verse and proper to prose: rhetoric, pleading, analysis, and the scrutiny of common life in its humours. This is done in drama and satire.

CHAPTER III.

FRENCH DRAMA¹: BOILEAU AND CRITICISM.

P. CORNEILLE TO RACINE: QUINAULT—RACINE: TRAINING AND BEGINNINGS AND CULMINATIONS—HIS GENIUS AND RULES AND STYLE—LATER TRAGEDY FAILS—COMEDY BEFORE MOLIÈRE—MOLIÈRE: LIFE, BEGINNINGS—HIS PRIME—LATTER WORKS—GASSENDISM—HIS GREATNESS—COMEDY, CONTEMPORARY AND SEQUENT: DANCOURT—REGNARD—BOILEAU-DESPRÉAUX—1661-71: 1. PARISIAN SATIRE; 2. ICONOCLASM; CHAPELAIN; 3. PROPHECY: THE GREAT CLASSICS; 4. "ART POÉTIQUE": BOILEAU'S ART—1674-1711: LATTER CAREER—LITERARY CRITICISM IN THE AIR—LES RR. PÈRES—THE FORMULE: THEIR MEANING—ANTIQUITY AGAIN—CLASH OF RATIONALISM AND HUMANISM—NO PROGRESS IN ART—ANCIENTS AND MODERNS: 1. BOILEAU AND PERRAULT; 2. FONTENELLE, HIS SCIENCE; 3. THE EPILOGUE—THE REGULATION OF FRENCH AFTER A CONTEST—DICTIONARIES: THE ACADEMY.

THE French tragedy, that came to flower under the absolute monarchy in the third quarter of the century, had, unlike the comedy of Molière, an august history behind it. Not only in Corneille, but in its Senecan ancestry, French, Italian, Latin, and in the Greek drama itself, must the roots be sought of its special structure and conventions. The defeat of its European authority may be said to begin with the attacks made by Lessing on Voltaire in the *Hamburgische Drama-*

¹ The dates given of plays are those of representation.

turgie (1767). Even now, the patriotic estimate of Corneille and Racine remains unadjusted with what may be called the Germanic estimate. Doubtless it is one reason of this schism of opinion that some of the best French critics are terribly cooped up in their own literature, and do not see that criticism is an international affair. Another reason is the ignorant dogmatism of Schlegel and some other Germans, who tried to sneer Racine out of court. Mr Matthew Arnold, who was almost without any organ for French poetry, seemed to think the cult of Racine all but superstition. It is true, indeed, that Racine is not like Molière, who belongs to the world more than any other writer of France. But, on the other hand, he reveals, in form that is perfect, some of the deeper native delicacies of the French genius, as Corneille reveals the nobler reserves of the French character.

Pierre Corneille, "the great Corneille," dying, wretchedly enough, in 1684, outliving his favour and his genius, and seeing but not understanding the full triumph of the classical ideals, belongs to the earlier world. His characters breathe of the Fronde and the social disorders, and of the stiff-necked pride of the aristocracy. Among his central conceptions were the victory of sovereign heroic will over the affections and personal interests, and the self-sacrifice of the hero to

high state requirements. He represents
P. Corneille
to Racine : the free play of extraordinary characters.
Quinault.

Some of these aims at first preoccupy Racine, but Racine does not derive quite directly from Corneille. Between came a school of tragedy,

of which the subject-matter is commonly drawn from the heroic romance, and which is hence called *romanesque*. This inspiration is pre-classical, so that no more than a mention can be given either to Thomas Corneille, the younger brother of Pierre, or to Philippe Quinault, although both of them prolonged their volubility till late in the century. Thomas Corneille (1625-1709) was a person of adaptive inferior talent, wrote (see below, p. 129) one good comedy, and registers the changes in dramatic fashion. His *Timocrate* (1656), the most popular play of the age, is an elaborate romance of unlikely disguise and intrigue, knocked into theatrical form. His *Ariane* (1672) and his *Comte d'Essex* (1678) are touched with the desire to be like Racine; both pieces are sentimentalised, and both are weakly written. Quinault (1635-1688) brought out his tragedies from 1658 to 1666 (*Amalasonte*; *Stratonice*, 1660; *Astrate*, 1663; *Pausanias*). Their worth is light; their historical significance is, that they transferred the ruling interest of sentimental love from the romances to the stage. Hence Racine was left freer to desert the stoical themes of Corneille, and to give relief to his favoured dramatic motive of a love that is stronger than other considerations. But love, in Racine, is made complex and noble, and is entwined with studies of ambition and malignity. It is not often merely of the languorous and quibbling variety. Quinault shows some skill in the overture and conduct of his plots, and is at times free from the dulcet fluency that is habitual to him. But this quality brought him more

fame in the lyrical operas of which he was the chief inventor, and which are not without relation to poetry. These he composed, from 1672 onwards, in partnership with the musician Lulli, who held a monopoly from the Crown of operatic musical performance. Quinault helped Molière and Corneille in their *Psyché* (1671), and turned out many pieces that were mythological (*Cadmus, Atys, Phæton*) or romantic (*Amadis, Roland*) in subject, or rather in label. Destitute of lyrical passion, Quinault's irregular verse has its easy, rather abandoned graces, and the relaxation, to which his entertainments ministered, enters into it.

Jean Racine (1639-1699), who finally stated and achieved the French ideals of classical tragedy,¹ was born of a citizen family at La Ferté-Milon, near Soissons. In early youth he was taught by Lancelot and other masters of Port-Royal—a schooling that coloured his conceptions of religion, human character, and art. Man, to Racine, is often a being who reasons concerning the impotence of his reason to resist his affections; and this, it has often been said, answers somewhat to the Jansenist theory that humanity is helpless in the default of divine grace. Further, Racine ends by believing—though the belief does not appear till *Athalie*—in a just providence which overrules the passionate aims of the individual. These ideas were ever latent in him; but they were checked; for the chief event of his life is his escape from his religious masters during the

Racine;
training and
beginnings

¹ *G. E. F.*, 8 vols., ed. Mesnard; E. Deschanel, *Le Romantisme des Classiques*, 1883; P. Robert, *La Poétique de Racine*, 1890.

prime of his dramatic powers. But Port-Royal also gave Racine his Greek, his Virgil, and his humanism, so that he shows better than any contemporary except Milton what is meant by "the union of the two antiquities," biblical and classical.

But Racine must be trained in the world and the court in order to imagine natures that are full of intricate policy and strange passions. He was not to break with his teachers without mordant and ungracious replies to their remonstrances; such were his letters, one of them published (1666), to his old master Nicole, the author of *Les Visionnaires*. But he became the friend of Boileau, who was a school of good sense to him; of La Fontaine; and of Molière, a little older, and by now the director of his own theatre. To this company, already proclaiming their watch-cries of nature, sense, and simplicity with a just insolence and emphasis, Racine joined himself. He made some elegies and odes of no account, and epigrams in prose and verse of a keen, not to say malignant, quality. Then, at the house of Molière, he brought out two tragedies, much in the manner of Corneille, of which the second showed some force. These were *La Thébàide* and *Alexandre le grand* (1665). There is no need to chronicle the war of sets and theatres in which he was soon engaged, or his unhappy opposition to the old Corneille, or the attacks that he made and met. The sharp gaiety and observation of his single comedy, *Les Plaideurs* (1668), adds to his affinities with the friend and helper, Molière, whom he capriciously deserted some years before. In 1667 he took his rank

as a tragic author with *Andromaque*, which is founded less on Euripides than on Virgil, and is Virgilian in its warlike and imperial passages as well as in the music of its pathos. But it is also, despite patches of weakness, sombre and analytic, a study of tyrannous and ambitious desire. The union of these qualities with grace and charm revealed a fresh writer. The new literature needed grace and charm. La Fontaine's *Fables* were a year later; Boileau and Furetière had lifted up their voice in the service of sardonic good sense, and Bossuet had already long been preaching. But the harmony and sweetness for which Racine is rightly praised were often subservient to the sterner interest. In the palace tragedy of *Britannicus* (1669) the spirit of Tacitus, who is the authority for the story, is felt, and the last line is a suffocating forecast of yet worse things than are transacted in the play. It was unpopular; Shakespeare was a sound playwright as well as a sage when he ended his history plays with the hopes of a new reign. The soul of Nero is hazarded and lost during the action. *Bérénice* (1670) is a play of sensibility; the stress is on the meeting and parting of lovers. The parting is said to be for state reasons; but Racine does not feel, as Corneille felt, the imperial call laid upon Titus. *Bajazet* (1672) is another palace tragedy, this time Eastern. The mind is carried beyond the furtive alcove intrigues and Bajazet's rejection of Roxana, by the fatal and embattled approach, which is gradually announced, of the Sultan Amurath, who precipitates the tragedy from afar. The play is whole spheres above most English

exotic tragedies of the period ; yet its interest is not of the first rate.

Mithridate (1673) goes much further ; it is nearly equal throughout in power, and has the widest historic vision of any secular play written by Racine. Its heroical rhetoric is filled with the breath of a great mad enterprise, that of conquering the masters of the world in a forlorn attack. It rings and culminations. with the names of the Eastern and Western peoples whose fate may be at the hazard. The love of Mithridate and of each of his two sons for the same woman is a subject wrought out with ceremonious delicacy. The solution is noble and probable ; the dying Mithridate suppresses revenge, and Monime is left to her rightful inheritor. *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1674) took Racine back, as he thought, to Greece, and his heroes have genuine epical traits. But the poverty of tragic scope is naked to the eye, and the timidities of the classic drama are seen at their worst. The poet not daring to kill a person so virtuous and amiable as Iphigenia, another damsel of the same name is furnished, according to an old variant of the legend, for the sacrifice ; and Eriphile—so she is known to the world—is duly culpable, and yet duly pitiable. This principle, which excludes from tragedy its Cordelias and Desdemonas, was one of the first weaknesses on which the romantic critics fastened. The same sham sense of dignity requires, in the play of *Phèdre* (1677), that a person of mean condition, and not the queen herself, should carry to Theseus the slander passed upon Hippolytus. The

opening transposition of the loveliest lines in Euripides is painful also. But *Phèdre* is a mighty work in its central scenes, full as well of the sense of irrevocable death as of the uncontrollable passion which despairs at its own weakness. Mme. Bernhardt playing in this character makes us wonder whether Greek was more lordly in its rhythmical movement, more open in its melodious vovelling, than the French of Racine at its highest.

Phèdre was not a success; and Racine, whether weary of cabals or seared at his own dramatic sympathy with formidable and odious passions, retired about this time to family life. He threw himself again on Port-Royal, which forgave him. His connection with the Court he preserved by his office as historiographer-royal, which he shared with Boileau. He was "historien très-imitable," according to Mme. de la Fayette; most of his official works are lost. To please Mme. de Maintenon he arranged (1689) the story of *Esther* lyrically, and too elegantly, for performance by the young girls of Saint-Cyr. The applause was very great, and in 1691, for the same audience, he produced *Athalie*, which was not understood and admired except by a few, and was not played in public till the next century. *Athalie*, which stood to the eighteenth-century critics as the acme of modern drama, is Racine's masterpiece. It has kept some of its glory, not merely because it has been favoured by the greatest actresses. In its poetic, in its point of view, the true parallel is *Samson Agonistes*, divided from it by only twenty years. Both are keen with contemporary allusion, which melts into ob-

security at baffling points. Both clearly expound the distinction between a right and a wrong polity, and both are plays of which the vital nerve is a faith in the historical operations of Providence—a faith not different from that of Bossuet in his *Discours*. Racine, equally with Milton, applies the simplified and noble conventions of Greek tragedy—the few actors, the slow action, the choric comment in the interludes—to a sacred subject-matter. He elaborates plot, character, and scenery much more than Milton; Abner and Jehoiada are drawn with endless nicety. Milton comes far nearer the heights of the Greek or the Jewish utterance. Amidst all differences, the two works are of one order, the last handiwork of Christian art, struck out on the eve of a great alienation of the European mind from the thought and temper that they embody. Bayle had begun to write before Racine had finished. For Racine's remaining years there is the record of his letters, somewhat formal in address, but vivid with friendship and irritable high breeding.

The choric chants and recitatives in *Esther* and *Athalie* have the oratorical movement of solemn heated prose. Racine is not moved to sing, but he has come to think that the action must be made continuous by the apposite meditations of the chorus. He could never have accepted the inorganic lyrical choruses of Euripides. And in all his previous plays,

His genius too, he had aimed at unity and simplicity of action; at the cost of what Shaksperian life and infinitude, it would be unjust to try

and imagine. He took and perfected the national pattern of drama that was everywhere around him, just as Milton in *Paradise Lost* took a traditional pattern of epic. Genius in each case justifies the method and machinery, which is common to Milton and Chapelain in the one form, and to Racine and Boyer in the other. Racine's genius is felt in the thoroughness with which his impeccable sculpturing reason does its work at every point of the dramatic economy, and produces the unity and "harmony" which appeal eternally to his countrymen. The action is single, though it is served by an elaborate complexity of motive, and by much subtlety in the characters. Whatever is done is probable and natural in the person that does it. The absurd *revirements* or motiveless conversions of the English heroic play are quite beneath Racine. And he piques himself on rigidly excluding all incidental humours or asides that do not advance the action. Hence everything that is said tends to fall into the mood of impassioned pleading, which is meant to persuade to the action, and to push the story on, wave after wave, to its issue. Hence, too, the forensic tone that rules. Racine is full of speeches for the defence, which are addressed often to some personage whose decision is all-important to the result. The necessity of expounding and justifying explains the convention of the confidant. The protagonists are never really alone, and this is a trait of most of the French classical writers themselves.

The ancients, in their artistic habits and style, seemed to Racine and his fellows the embodiment

of reason. Therefore the theatrical economy of the ancients seemed the most suitable, and their habits had some of the force of "rules." But it is an error to speak as though Racine first swore himself under the bondage of the rules, and was "regular" in order to avoid perjury. His allusions to the *and rules* rules even have a twang of mock respect, as if he was satisfying his public rather than himself, and he expressly makes right and reason the judge of the rules. At the same time he usually accepts them. The limitations of place and time suit his talent. The exclusion of comedy from tragedy suits his notion, partly true, partly conventional, of dignity; it is a piece of his breeding, which leads to his ceremony and nicety of diction, which is usually exquisite, though sometimes punctilious or frigid. His chief superstition is to feel that he must depend on written authority for his facts or legends, and laboriously vouch for every variant on tradition. The only valid objection to altering a tradition is the shock caused to the memories of the audience, and the stories of Esther or Joash had therefore to be respected; but it was not so with the material drawn from Euripides, or those communications of the ambassador to Turkey which are the ultimate basis of *Bajazet*. Lastly, in the matter of poetical justice Racine varies: it is chiefly in his religious plays that he affirms it, and then more for religious than æsthetic reasons. *Britannicus*, for instance, represents the opposite extreme, and ends by prophesying the increase of triumphant iniquity.

The great changefulness and resource of Racine in

his verse¹ and diction it is well to leave the French themselves to celebrate. Metrically the English classical couplet, and not blank verse, is the proper parallel. Dryden's manner in the *Hind and Panther*, with its measured freedom of grouping and breaking the lines, its range from the resonant and Latin-sounding verse to the familiar *pedestris* *and style.* *sermo*, is perhaps a nearer equivalent than that of Pope's, who isolates the line and couplet. But Racine, even to an English ear, stands with or above Dryden and Pope at their very best in steadiness of sweet and open sonority, in flawless avoidance of a throng or jar of consonants. This cannot be merely the nature of the French language; for we do not feel the same thing with Voltaire, the greatest of those who tried to follow Racine. The extremes of his style, too, are much farther apart than the apparent monotony and robed dignity of his verse might seem to allow. Sometimes the classical, even a Lucretian, note is audible:—

“En vain vous espérez qu'un dieu vous le renvoie :
Et l'avare Achéron ne lâche point sa proie.”

Or there is a curtness very near that of vehement prose—

“Je vous ai déjà dit que je la répudie” ;

or there is the long-drawn sound of pathetic entreaty—

“Retournez, retournez à la fille d'Helène.”

¹ For the technique of verse in *all* the great classical writers reference must be made to the very ample inquiry of M. Maurice Souriau, *L'Evolution du Vers français au XVIII^e Siècle*, 1893.

In Racine classicism comes to such perfection that it seems to go beyond its own conceptions and aims. The eighteenth-century critics spent themselves in proclamations of his greatness. They did not know, or could not understand, either the ancients from which Racine himself drew, or the greatness of the English and Spanish dramas. The Germans and romantics vindicated these things, and founded their own forms in defiance. But Racine has now nothing to fear, when a wider comparison has placed him supreme in his own kind, which is not the greatest.

During the life of Racine, and the rest of the reign, French tragedy is terribly prolific, but very little of it retains even the historical interest in any measure. There are those who have found it harder reading than the obsolete theology, or the fifth-rate fiction-memoir, or the contemporary English tracts on currency. It

Later tragedy is probably duller, taken as a whole, than
fails. the corresponding mass of English drama produced at the end of the century. And yet it cannot be denied that, open almost where we will, there is something in it which the English plays have not got. There is the presence of a purer model,—purer in the outline of plot, purer in the concentration on truth of character, purer in style. Even where there is not Racine behind, there is Quinault, whose stream was fairly clear, however mawkish. And single pieces have relative merit, like the *Regulus* of Pradon, the rival of Racine and victim of Boileau, or the *Andronic* (1685) of Jean-Galbert de Campistrion, Racine's disciple. *Andronic*, the melau-

choly son of the emperor (one of the Palæologi), who is his successful rival and tragic oppressor, is a genuine personage; and Campistron, who also wrote *Aleibiade* (1685), *Tiridate* (1691), and much else, knows how to build a play, and is the best of the *épigoni*. The truth was, that after the silence of the masters, tragedy, like comedy, tended to perish, not so much of imitation as of reversion. Comedy, it will be seen, had a sturdier life after Molière, though it inclined back to farce; but tragedy was branded with the weakness of the romances, to which it was still really affiliated. The weakly love-interest, the maze and contest of sentimentalities, still prevailed in it. One attempt at invigoration made by the dramatist La Fosse (Antoine de la Fosse d'Aubigny, died 1708) was worthy but not well accomplished. His *Manlius Capitolinus* (1698) is a curious transposition of *Venice Preserved* to the scenery of old Rome, Pierre becoming a Manlius and Jaffier a Servilius. An attempt by Longepierre to adapt the tale of Medea directly from the Greek was no more successful. The names of Boyer, Lagrange-Chancel, and others cumber the page. French tragedy, before coming into the hands of Voltaire, reached its term in the earlier plays of the elder Crébillon, Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon (1674-1762)—who may be said to unite Nathaniel Lee's violence of incident with all the superstitions of decorum. One of his chief efforts was *Atrée et Thyeste* (1707); and Atrée is a very tolerable monster; but Crébillon explains in his preface how the actual horrors are evaded "pour ne point offrir Atrée sous une figure désagréable." His

completest and most famous play is *Rhadamiste et Zénobie* (1711), a furious complication of jealousies between fathers and sons, of incests made innocent by ignorance, and of horrors diluted or skipped at the last moment in the cause of propriety.

French comedy waited for a master until the age of form and reason. Molière effaced all previous achievement in this field, but only because he absorbed it. He can hardly have distinguished the current forms of jocular art from the national life of which they were the somewhat crazy mirror. He preyed on every kind of experience, no matter on comedy before Molière. what stage enacted, that fitted his bent. This is one of the causes of the volume and power which he possesses beyond the other classical writers. He was less urban, less abstract, fuller in temperament, and deeper in the life of the nation, even than La Fontaine. Hence he sifted out the valuable elements from existing comedy, decided the true type of the kind in France, and carried it to a further perfection than any successor. The history of comedy¹ before his day does not belong to this book. But it may be remembered that between 1650 and 1660 there were four chief kinds, none of which Molière ignored, and none of which was alone strong enough to solve the anarchy prevailing in the

¹ See V. Fournel, *Le Théâtre au xvi^e Siècle, La Comédie*, 1892, chap. i. The latter part of this work, though somewhat complaisant to the smaller comic writers around Molière, is the most learned and lively account of them. See, too, *Les Contemporains de Molière* (by the same author, containing chosen comedies and much theatrical history), 3 vols., 1863.

comic art. (1) Popular farce had a long and deep history in France, and depended not only on infinite clowning, “turlupinade,” and unclothed jesting, but on a certain definite pungency and narrative point, comparable with those of the *fabliaux*. Molière’s fund of this kind of drama was inexhaustible. He had only to rub the lamp, to be waited on by a hundred genies of uproar, armed with fools’-caps, and syringes, and sticks for the shoulders of husbands. He also drew from (2) the farce and show of the Italian type, which was well known and much transfused into France. The interest here is more external, and consists in the combination of mazy intrigue with restless pantomime and bodily agility. The clowning is done by certain stock figures; and in such varieties as the “*commedia dell’ arte*” the framework of plot and incident is conventional, and is filled in by an improvised, or stereotyped, fence of words. The almost fevered bustle of Molière’s lighter pieces has no other origin. (3) The comedy of extravagant burlesque, or the heroi-comic drama—comedy which is itself ridiculous, but also amusing—was tolerably rife. Desmarets and Cyrano de Bergerac had tried it; but the most salient instance, and one of the nearest to the classical period, is Scarron’s *Don Japhet d’Arménie* (1652). This, as well as the exalted comedy of the Spanish kind, of which it was a travesty, Molière may be said (despite *Don Garcie* and *Don Juan*) to have dismissed. His public, the audience of the Petit-Bourbon, wanted farce, but they could not laugh freely at absolute chimeras, and in the case of the satiric drama they

had a taste for living victims. Not that Molière often stooped to travesty persons; but the class or professional figures—the precious, the pedant—or the false ideals of Arnolphe or Bélise, that moved his hostility, were alive and actual. (4) Corneille, not so much in his earlier pieces as in *Le Menteur* (1643-44), founded noble comedy, touched with gravity, illumined with high wit in the dialogue, subtle and studied in the conception of one leading person. Molière did not attain for some little while to anything so fine, but he was well aware of the model. Indeed, to whatever was worthy in these previous performances he came to add many other qualities. Chief of all, he turned comedy into the representation of character and into the criticism of life. By this latter phrase poetry has been defined; but it describes the function of high comedy far more than that of poetry; and if poetry be to prophesy concerning nature, death, and love, in a metrical form that is passionate and absolute, then Molière is not quite, or is seldom, a poet. What he is, short of this, we must recite his pilgrimage to show.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin was baptised in Paris on January 15, 1622, took the surname of Molière¹ in 1644, and died, also in Paris, on February 17, 1673. His father, Jean Poquelin, was an upholsterer to the king, and the family of his mother, born Marie Cressé,

¹ *G. E. F.*, 11 vols., ed. Despois and Mesnard; Life and bibliography in *Le Moliériste*, 1879-89; P. Stapfer, *Molière, Shakespeare, et la Critique allemande*, 1882; F. Lotheissen, *Molière, Leben und Werke*, Frankfurt-a-M., 1880. See bibliographies—e.g., in Lanson, *Histoire*, p. 503. The literature is very great.

was in the same business. Molière was well taught, especially in Latin, at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont. The thinker Gassendi, who died in 1655, was probably his acquaintance, and was certainly the master who coloured some of his deepest opinions.

Molière: life.

But these were long to be hidden. At the age of twenty-one, Molière, giving up all projects of upholstering, and averse to the law, joined the troupe of the Bèjarts, which after a spell of bad luck in Paris went off, about the end of 1646, to pad the provinces. He wandered thus for some twelve years, rose by degrees to lead the company, and learned the arts of theatrical management and of acting. He also learned the humours of France, with the nice impassable distances and the several stupidities of its social ranks. He acquired several of the *patois*, and much that was afterwards his material for dramatic ridicule. In this school he made himself, amongst other things, the greatest farce-writer in the world. His vagrant mumming life, with its high days and fast-days, its clashes with officialdom, its humiliations and squalor and fever, such as are shown in Scarron's *Roman comique*, was itself a farce, but with a streak of bitterness. Molière's wildest pieces have a strain of choicer comedy, and his greater ones have the full deep note of experience that distinguishes him from successors like Regnard. The life which made him a comic artist also gave him his chagrins. So great a man deserved to find repose, and to be saved from all confusion, in his affections. But in 1662 he married Armande Bèjart,

much younger than himself, and probably the sister of Madeleine Béjart, sometime his companion and leading lady of his troupe. Very much has been written on the possible scandals of the case. Molière should have the benefit of the mystery in which he left it. It may be worth saying that his plays show no trace of the discord and hesitation that would attend an ambiguous change of passion, while they are full of reference to the natural doubts that beset a man of forty in marrying a young girl, and to the fitful unhappiness that in his case actually followed.¹

Broad comedy of the thoughtless order was his first experiment. *L'Etourdi*, the first of his complete plays that is extant, was played at Lyons in 1655, or perhaps two years earlier. It has no construction. Léliu, the marplot of his own fortunes in love, continues to blunder through the five acts, until at last, when the audience is moving, he fails to defeat

the efforts undertaken by Mascarille, his *beginnings.* servant, in his behalf. Mascarille is substantially drawn; he is the first of Molière's endless incarnations of the eternal comic knave, who intrigues for the just happiness of the lovers, and is at once the means of jest, the spring of the action, and the voice of the comedian's sympathy with the triumph of youth. Part of the sketch is from an Italian source. *Le Dépit amoureux* (1656) draws also

¹ This is stated dogmatically; but it is the handsomest supposition, I believe, that is at all likely. I cannot follow the plea for whitewashing the matter further that is urged by M. G. Larroumet, *La Comédie de Molière, L'Auteur et le Milieu*, 4th ed., 1893, a book that is necessary for study.

upon Latin drama. Though it is still the play of quip and convention, not yet nerved by satire, the comedy in the love-passages is high and genial.

Two years later Molière's company was in Paris, and played some stock pieces before the king. The royal favour and shelter were necessary to such a campaigner, and nothing less would have saved him. In 1659 the satiric farce of *Les Précieuses ridicules* withered the whole fabric of fashionable, Hôtel de Rambouillet taste. The service done by the *précieuses*, and their talk and writing, to literary morals and manners, was accomplished, their time was come, and their forms were now shown to be obsolete. M. Coquelin can still hold even an English audience with the living riot of humours in this play. The infuriated suitors, the valets whom they trick out in the hat and coats of marquises, the scornful dupes Cathos and Madelon fresh from the provinces, the poetical jargon, the exposure, are all classical memories. *Sganarelle, ou le Cocu imaginaire* is a boisterous farce of craven and causeless jealousy in the bourgeois; whilst in *Dom Garcie de Navarre* (1661) the jealousy, though equally ill-founded, is fantastic, Spanish, and heroi-comical. But Molière's accent of victorious good sense is not fully heard until the two plays that followed. Each of them presses a strong, almost breathless, comic situation into the service of a satiric idea. In *L'Ecole des Maris* (1661) the savage pedantry of Sganarelle avenges itself. By Isabelle, his ward, whom he has mewed up, intending to marry her in his private preserve, he is made the messenger to her

lover, the interpreter of her plans for escape, and the agent of her happiness. Through Ariste, the brother of Sganarelle Molière sets forth his idea of a reasonable education for damsels, based on freedom and confidence, and perhaps also his apology to himself for marrying a young wife. It would be immoral to pity Sganarelle; but Arnolphe, in *L'Ecole des Femmes* (1662), who with a similar purpose has brought up his Agnès in the imbecility of innocence, is a man, though a pedant, and has at every step of his punishment, which is completed without mercy, the sympathy of Molière. He is confuted, not merely confounded, and his eyes are bitterly opened by the terrible Agnès, who repays him in a last interview for years of false treatment. He has already, at each stage of his defeat, enjoyed the confidence of the successful lover, who only knows him under another name. *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* (1665) is the sharp answer of the author to the gang of adversaries who had scented a few innuendoes too keenly. It is an admirable interlude in prose, and itself a satire. The doctrinal fervour of these comedies concentrates their power and art, and is no hindrance to them.

Meantime Molière entered on the stress of his career and the prime of his mental force. He was continually at war, and his best works are full of superb strife and passion. His relations with his wife, who was an exquisite comedian, were patched up and loosed again. The triple labour of playing, writing, and managing, added to all these distrac-

tions, could not keep down his springs of gaiety, and he wrote much entertainment and farce, *His prime.* often to the royal order. He received a pension and protection from the king, and conquered his position, but had to fight to keep it. He was fortified by the alliance with Boileau and La Fontaine, and became in their company aware of his artistic creed. His abandonment by Racine, whom he introduced to the public, was at the end of 1665. From 1664-69 he wrote and played his three great works, which can be more clearly studied to the exclusion of lesser labours.

In *Le Tartuffe* comedy almost loses its title. Three acts were played privately in the spring of 1664, the rest, also in private, later; but public licence for the whole drama was not secured and used till 1669. The clergy and the devout party, headed by the queen-mother, caused this delay of five years, and modern critics have been found to twist it into an attack, conceived in the libertine interest, on the essence of religion. In *Tartuffe* some four or five of the mortal sins are invested with the language of the apostolic virtues. But the particular vice chastised is greed for money and for unlawful influence over women, covered, or half-covered, with hypocrisy, and residing in the person of a priestly director of families. The part may be differently played, malignly and with sombre professional airs by M. Febvre, with broad and blatant unctiousness by M. Coquelin. In any case it is gigantic, the largest ever invented in its own kind. The energy and

cunning of Tartuffe are such that no ordinary salvation for his victims is credible, and Providence deputes the greatest and most vigilant of kings to interfere for the destruction of such a social pest and such a menace to authority. This may explain the *dénoûment*, which seems, and is, so irrelevant; the royal officer comes down from the clouds and carries Tartuffe away. Molière's *dénoûments* have often been censured; but in *Dom Juan*, as well as in *L'Avare*, their arbitrary character is due to the exuberant energy of the sinister protagonist, whom Molière's plotting power is too weak or careless to dispose of logically. Molière probably did not wish to scarify one clerical party more than another; but his play was ranged with the *Lettres Provinciales* as a blow at the Jesuit accommodations of morality.

Dom Juan, ou Le Festin de pierre (1665) is a disclaimer. Molière justly denied any sympathy with the supposed libertine consequences of his gospel of following nature. For Juan, the type of ruinous will, another destroyer of society, follows *his* nature,—he also, in his impudent actions and calculations: and the thunder of Providence is ready and requisite for such cases, which are not absolutely rare. In some such sense Molière adapted parts of the very powerful original by Tirso de Molina,¹ perhaps known to him through an Italian version. He left unused some of the most drastic scenes, but hurried into a

¹ *El Burlador de Sevilla, y Convidado de piedra* ('The Mockers of Seville, or the Guest of Stone'). The French sub-title seems a mis-translation of the Spanish, or of its Italian equivalent (*convitato*).

few desperate strokes of prose the final supper-party with the stone statue of the Comendador, a victim of Juan, and father of one of his victims. The Marlowesque terrors of this conclusion, and the icy physiognomy of Juan himself, are not lost, and there is mastery of the theatre in every line. Molière adds a current of Shakespearian irony in Sganarelle, the knave of Juan, who sounds a chorus of protest, but is cowed and enlisted by his master's coolness and courage. He speaks the peroration of the play.¹ The thought was quite too hardy for the public, and the work was not printed till long after Molière's death.

Here, and in *Le Misanthrope* (1666), one of the chief works of French thought, Molière escapes some of the ordinary limitations of classicism, which, in its passion for strict outline and clearness, knew only too well all that it meant to say, and left only too little for the author's demon to add on its own account. The unreconciled disorders of Molière's experience are echoed in the play, which is in consequence packed with meaning and perplexity. Hence, while starting with some definite and characteristic ideas, he is led into profounder regions. Society is hostile to sincere and natural speech. It favours bad, affected poetry, and not the little snatch of lyric where "la passion parle toute pure." It has no place for the irritable, penetrating,

¹ "Ah! mes gages, mes gages! Voilà, par sa mort, un chacun satisfait. Ciel offensé, lois violées, filles séduites, familles déshonorées, parents outragés, femmes mises à mal, maris poussés à bout, tout le monde est content, il n'y a que moi seul de malheureux. Mes gages, mes gages, mes gages!"

and noble Alceste, for it is, by the sheer need of self-preservation, unjust to the truth which he insists on speaking out. Society could not go on if he were permitted to be heard. It is strong, full of strategy, and sees the weakness of its critics, whom it never forgives. Célimène embodies the light hypocrisies and deeper coqueties of such a world. Alceste attacks her for that reason; but he is tied to her, he cannot help loving her, and she uses her skill to put him in the wrong. His noble spirit bears the brunt of a kind of ridicule, and so the curtain drops. This poetical injustice is not a comic solution at all, but a kind of tragic solution,—only without death, and yet again without the certainty of hopelessness. There is a further embarrassment of the sympathies, just like that we suffer in life, when Célimène, on her part, stands for nature and truth in face of the ill-natured prudish Arsinoë. *Le Misanthrope*, therefore, must always irritate speculation.

Like Shakespeare, Molière had a cynical phase, when his frank sympathies may seem to have been a little perverted. The *Amphitryon* and the *Georges Dandin*

Luttre works. of 1668 are of an old stock kind, for which he had long since shown himself too good. The first, founded on the play of Plautus, turns on “errors” of identity, and on the joke of personating an absent husband, which gods, and perhaps kings, may do with much applause. In the second, founded on one of Molière’s youthful sketches, our disgusted pity is awakened for the wretched peasant, who is forced on his knees to beg pardon

for reproaching his well-born wife with the infidelity which he has seen but cannot prove. The play is otherwise rich in wit and bustle, and lives by the types of the parents, the Sotenvilles, purblind in their family arrogance. In *L'Avare* (1668) Molière regained his width, if not all his gaiety, and turned to the sombre comedy of monstrous humours. Harpagon, who fleeces his son and daughter and nearly secures the heroine, and who is not wholly punished in his avarice—for he is suffered to keep his beloved money-box—is so strong that the justice of comedy remains but half-satisfied. Frosine, the go-between, and the servants and accessory persons are excellent, and the play rings with energy. A number of farces and ballets, seasoned with opera-bouffé, followed at this stage; of these *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, with its M. Jourdain, is the highest in animal spirits (1670). In *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, Molière surpassed all his early effort in the comedy of knavish dodges.

The splendid satire of *Les Femmes savantes* (1672) was intended to silence a whole mouthing pack of pedantries, some of which were of a very vicious temper. The personal travesties of Cotin, Boileau's victim, in the character of Trissotin, and (possibly) of Ménage in that of Vadius, are inferior. Molière's own diction was free, rich, and incorrect, and he took delight in making the she-pedant Bélise dismiss her cook for badness of grammar. Armande is the most odious female (unless we count the Angélique of *Georges Dandin*) that he ever represented, and he elects to clothe her spite and duplicity in the jargon

of philosophy. She affects to be detached from sense, to respect spirit only, like a good Cartesian; and she also uses, *ad nauseam*, the Quietist phraseology of the "pur amour." Henriette, whom Armande tries to defraud of her own discarded lover, is her sister, but full of charm and sense, on whom no false taste or sophistry has a moment's hold. She seems to give us Molière's final idea of what was attractive in woman. *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673) was his last work, and he was taken with his fatal illness whilst acting in it. It is a wild eathination of derision and despite against the pedantries of medicine, and almost against medicine itself, which was in Molière's day superstitious and full of quackery, and seemed to him an offence against the healing power of unburdened nature.¹

Molière shares in the oblique influences that descend from Descartes. He is fond of tirade and reasoning, deifies good sense and the natural lights of the mind against pedantic authority, and

Gassendism.

¹ The remaining plays of Molière should be named, and may be thus divided. (1) Short comedies without ballet: *L'Impromptu de Versailles*; *Le Mariage forcé* (1664), afterwards hacked into a ballet-show; *Le Médecin malgré lui* (1666); *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*. (2) "Comédie-ballets"—that is, with pageant, irregular operative verse, and dance in various mixtures: *Les Fâcheux* (1661); *L'Amour médecin* (1665); *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (1669). (3) The same with a pastoral or antique subject or pretence of subject: *La Princesse d'Elide*; *Mélicerte*; *Pastorale comique*; *Le Sicilien, ou l'Amour peintre* (1667); *Les Amants magnifiques*; *Psyché* (1671), the "tragédie-comédie-ballet," partly written with Corneille and Quinault, with Lulli's music. The works in the last two classes are often hasty pieces of mumming, got up to order for the royal pleasure. Others are true comedies, seasoned with interlude.

is deficient in concern for scenery. It has been mentioned how, once or twice, he is less conscious than most of the classical writers of the full drift of his own ideas. But usually he is quite clear with himself. His position towards formal philosophy is that of the ironical outsider, and he pits Panerace the scholastic and Marphurinus the Cartesian against one another in *Le Mariage forcé*, exactly as Fielding pits Square and Thwackum. But he is better trained in the technical terms than Fielding, and in *Les Femmes savantes* uses them with deadly effect. He had in truth been himself dyed in philosophy, or at least in its application by Gassendi. Though Gassendi was a good conforming churchman, he was equally with Descartes a rebel to the schools. But, again, he was revolted by the chasm that Descartes fixed between the two substances, the thinking spirit and the spatial world of body. For this led to a false abstraction of the spirit and reason in man from his senses and affections, which are so notably mixed up with them in our economy. Gassendi argued for the sensuous source of ideas, and adopted a select kind of epicureanism, confident in the dignity of our instincts and in the rights of man to pleasure. The impulse he gave to the free-thinking critics and *vivants* cannot be denied, and he is well spoken of by Saint-Evremond and his group. Chapelle, the boon friend of Molière, and some others of Gassendi's set, took a loose turn. But in Molière Gassendism appears, without the formulæ, simply as the creed of giving human nature open play. He was not, as the *Festin de pierre* shows,

willing to question the current proofs of Providence, which are drawn from the show of design and skill; he wanted a providence *ex machinâ* for awkward cases. But his emphatic voice is ever lifted for nature, whose impulse is, at all ordinary costs, to be followed and obeyed. He was attacked in his day, and is still, by those who cannot bear that he should be right.

The prose comedy and farce of the living world, as distinct from the world of fancy and romance, have never been represented with greater profusion than in these plays. There was much in Shakespeare—much

His greatness, that was not in Molière at all—to divert

him from the comedy of contemporary manners and character. Molière's pasture was the France that he saw, viewed as stuff for amusement or for satire. This he represented with more, and not less, fidelity, by giving it those rounding and eternising touches that distinguish the artist from the note-taker. He cared above all for his personage—for sheer comic effectiveness in his theatre, being a born playwright and true to his trade; and, in his ampler work, he cared for his social or satiric idea. And what he cared for he achieved. He is not nearly so much concerned with making a skilled and harmonious plot, or with writing well and purely, though his language is overflowing and expressive; or with originality in his tales, which he borrows freely though with less indolence than Shakespeare. In his generous affluence of thought, life, and laughter, he is decidedly prior to the classical age, during which he produced his chief writings. He hardly lived to see

its full achievements in measure and delicacy, and he might not have overvalued them had he known them.

But of all the sons of classicism Molière suffers to the modern mind the least abatement. His greatness is so sound, and his spirit so right and cordial, that the lapse of time does not affect him. Bossuet and Swift are in some ways loftier. But Bossuet spent himself in a conservative effort, trying to push back with his hand the shadow on the dial, while Molière was filled with some of the most generous and prophetic of the ideas that were around him. Swift is mightier; his troubles are stranger; but the nature they exacerbate was not born to retain faith, or encourage it. Molière was well aware of bitterness; and yet his experience left him with a scarcely abated belief in gaiety, human nature, and youth. This must weigh well against some inferiorities in form, and a lack of purely poetical exaltation. "*Si vous rougissez de l'humanité, je n'en rougis pas,*" said Gassendi to Descartes; and we can imagine Molière repeating the words to the next great satirist, Swift. Like Fielding, though in richer measure, he was rewarded: if not one of the greatest of thinkers, or even of writers, he is one of the masters of humanity. He is also one of its chief presenters and dramatic creators. And to be this a man must have something in common with the cosmic principle, whatever it be, that rules the actual creation of mankind. Hence the hopefulness of a great dramatist is of more weight than that of most abstract philosophers. He

knows better of what he is talking. This union of buoyant creativeness with transcendent good sense and good cheer, retained amidst many causes for doubt, is shared by Shakespeare and Cervantes.

It will be remarked below how Molière, half a century after his death, found his worthiest peer and student in Holberg, the founder of Danish letters; and how the English playwrights of the Restoration and Revolution borrowed whatever of Molière they could understand. He imposed himself in somewhat the same external way upon comedy in his own land and lifetime. His inventions are scattered free; he is used by many dramatists. But they are not, like him, serious. Not only do they escape any charge of overthoughtfulness, but they seldom try to develop the comedy of character, of which Molière is thus the master rather than the founder. They chiefly abide in the comedy of intrigue, or of stereotypes, or of buffoonery. Little comedy that is still worth reading or playing was written in Molière's lifetime, but after his death it began to be much better.

Thomas Corneille (1625-1709), who outlived Molière, is, in his methods, a survivor from the older style. An expert builder of intricate Spanish-modelled pieces, he continued to pour them out freely. Quinault, in one of his comedies, did better than in all his operas and tragedies. *La Mère Coquette* (1665)

Comedy, is an astonishing work for the author of
contemporary L'Amant indiscret (which is a poor treatment of the theme of *L'Etourdi*.) The mother, larding herself with paint and flattery, and jealous of

her daughter, is a real person, and mordantly drawn; the gallant, marquise, and waiting-maid are of more than common distinctness; and there is a subtle, tortuous vein of irony, and a nicety in the surprises, that Molière himself did not attain at first. The *Crispin Médecin* of Hanteroché, the actor-writer, is one of the best specimens of pure fooling that can be quoted from this school, but it requires goodwill in the modern reader. From the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the rival house to Molière's, came one writer of real spirit, Antoine-Jacob Montfleury, the son of its leading player. Montfleury excels in pace and animation, and in plotting a grotesque persecution that turns on an improbable disguise. *La Femme Juge et Partie* (1669) relates the taming of a husband, worse than shrewish, by the wife whom he has banished on a false suspicion. She soon returns in the guise of a gallant, to win the new mistress whom he is courting, and finally to pose as his judge and wring out his confession. In *La Fille Capitaine* the cowardice of an odious elderly bourgeois is humiliated by a swaggering captain or *matamore*, who is no other than the damsel Angélique in uniform. Montfleury keeps the comic sympathy clean, and deals more even justice than Molière in *Dandin*. His comedy is quick, shallow, and glittering, and he is more skilful and interesting than Edme Boursault (1638-1701), another writer of the opposition. Boursault's foolish attacks on Molière and Boileau were punished, and may be forgotten. His fables he offers modestly, content with the glory "of being endured where La Fontaine

is admired." They are scattered through his two chief comedies, *Esopé à la Ville* (1690) and *Esopé à la Cour* (1701). Esop, like Boursault himself, is a worthy, didactic personage, the less tedious that his apologies are neatly turned. His conduct is a pleasing piece of handsome resignation and reserve. Boursault also wrote a lively piece *à tiroirs*, or detached scenes externally strung together, *Le Mercure galant*. The humours of a news-office, somewhat like those of Jonson's *Staple of News*, and of the various applicants for puffery, are well conducted, and the play is suggested by an actual sheet of the same title, exploited by Donneau de Visé, another and obscurer comedian. Boursault also tried versified legend in his play of *Phaëton*; but, like many of his fellows who cannot here be named, he is condemned, to quote one of his own better lines—

"Garder un long silence après un peu de bruit."

It is requisite to pass over Dufresny (*L'Esprit de Contradiction*), Brécourt, and many who may be found in the indefatigable collections of M. Victor Fournel. But one adaptation by the strange partners Brueys and Palaprat—the first a Catholic convert and theologian, the second a lawyer—should be mentioned—namely, *L'Avocat Patelin*, in which the famous and unique fifteenth-century farce of *Maître Patelin* is made presentable, shapely, and modern. Little could be, and little was, added to the gay rascality of the original humours.

During those years of the reign that succeeded the

death of Molière, comedy falls¹ into less faltering hands, and becomes a brilliant *Schelmenroman*, or story of roguery; of chevaliers, marquises, and other adventurers with titles to sell in marriage, and of up-
and sequent: starts coveting those titles and prepared
Dancourt. to pay; of the confusion of ambitions and ranks in the days before the regency; of the madness for gaming and luxury, and the appetites of the ambitious lawfolk or small tradesmen. It might be called the comedy of social voracities. No antidote, no contrary ideal, is suggested, and there is no rancour on the part of the satirist, while at the same time his picture is sharp and without complaisance. In various ways this new comedy is begun by Dancourt, Regnard, and Lesage. Florent Carton Dancourt² (1661-1725), a person of good birth, who turned actor in Molière's company and is reported to have played well in the *Misanthrope*, improvised many quick, light, and short comedies of manners, of which the best are *Le Galant Jardinier* (1704), *Le Mari retrouvé* (1698), *L'Été des Coquettes* (1690); but there are a host of others, such as *Les Trois Cousines* (1700), where Dancourt presents his millers, bailiffs, and peasants with an amazing energy and nicety, and with a good-humoured touch that draws blood. He is more at home with the masses than any one of the classical writers, even Molière.

¹ See J. Lemaitre, *La Comédie après Molière et le Théâtre de Dancourt*, 1882. For select plays, *Chefs-d'œuvre d'Auteurs comiques*, 8 vols. (Didot), 1860, &c.

² *Œuvres*, 1760, 12 vols., and in *Auteurs comiques* (selections): and in *Répertoire général du Théâtre français*, many vols., 1810, &c.

Les Bourgeoises de Qualité (1700) is a much stronger and more careful play; and the two lawyers' dames, who conspire to entrap and fleece one another's husbands in order to minister to their own ambitious extravagance, are formidable enough. Dancourt produced his completest play, *Le Chevalier à la Mode*, in 1687, which is the masterpiece of his peculiar sort. The Chevalier de la Villefontaine, courting two elderly ladies at once, and one young one besides, makes the same copy of verses serve for them all, and exploits them all: his only punishment is failure, and he goes off, still hoping that the patience of one of his victims is not exhausted. The knaveries in the piece are of the brightest and quickest. The Chevalier, carrying on a double flirtation with two ladies, in the presence of both, and with explanatory asides to each, exhibits the transposition, into the world of bourgeois swindle, of a famous and breathless scene in Molière's *Dom Juan*.

But the tenacity to the classic ideals is felt even in the gay spirit of Jean-François Regnard¹ (1655-1709). In the prologue to his comedy of errors—one of the best of the sort ever written—*Les Ménéchmes* (1705),

Plautus, the original creditor for the plot,
Regnard. is led to express the hope that Apollo may

choose a writer "moitié-français, moitié-roman," fitted to adapt the Latin comedy. In grip of construction, light nicety of versing, and in inexhaustible jest, Regnard comes near this demand; but he is nine-

¹ *Œuvres*, 6 vols., 1823; *Œuvres choisies* (plays, fiction, and verse), Garnier.

tenths French, or more, in his comic attitude and tone. A travelled, sumptuous person, he has left certain records of his voyages in Northern Europe, and his strange captivity in Algiers is told, not without vapid embroideries, in his romance, *La Provençale*. He also wrote Horatian epistles, and was one of those with whom Boileau quarrelled and was then reconciled. In the dedication to *Les Mèncchmes*, nature, truth, and good taste are celebrated in the person of Despréaux, with whom is coupled the name of Pindar. Regnard began with a prolonged practice in light farce and interlude, at the house of the Italian comedians and at the Théâtre français (*Le Bal*, *Les Folies amoureuses*), and outdid the bewildering, flighty wit and grotesqueness that were demanded of him. His first comedy of character, *Le Joueur* (1696), is ingenious in plan, and conciliates with our sympathies an ending that is long held in suspense. The see-saw of a gambler between his vice and his love, and that of his mistress between her love for the gambler and her just and dignified pique, closes with the victory of the vice in the one case, and with its punishment by the victory of dignity in the other. Such a solution befits a personage who pawns his lady's picture for the diamond setting, and is in no hurry to redeem the pledge when he is again in cash. But the chevalier goes off in good spirits to fresh fields. *Le Distrail* (1698) is an effort to dramatise La Bruyère's Ménalque, the absent-minded but high-minded suitor. The seam between the two elements is bungled by the sheer concessions to pantalooning; but there is

much comic impetus, and some weighty verse that is liker Molière than anything else in Regnard. *Le Legataire universel* (1708), founded on a sixteenth-century *novella* of Marco di Lodi, is Regnard's most magnificent comedy. The exercise of tricky invention and mumming in the despite of crabbed, amorous, suspicious, and disgusting age, has never been so mirthfully represented. The servant Crispin, first personating the boorish country kinsfolk whom it is desirable to see disinherited; then personating Géronte, who is thought to have died intestate, to the notaries who came to take down the will, fattening himself in the bequests at the cost of his young master; and finally persuading Géronte, who has only fainted, that he has made the will himself in a lethargy,—Crispin is the concentration of all the countless Crispins of this latter school of comedy. When some one said to Boileau that Regnard was a mediocre poet, he answered, "Il n'est pas médiocrement gai." And in the service of his gaiety he uses great knowledge of the stage and of manners, the power of enchaining the scenes and lightly carrying the action onwards, and a quick, highly individual strain of verse. Like Dancourt, and like Lesage in *Turcaret*, Regnard is perfectly free from morality, and is on a level, except in his superior acuteness, with the world he describes. He is also equally free from mercy or indulgence. He portrays his characters with the familiar not unamiable sharpness of a clear-sighted near relation. He has an abounding sense of humour, but no sense of superiority. *Turcaret* (1709) is another comedy

turning on money, and is a more solid sardonic study of a usurer and his discomfiture; but *Gil Blas* and the other stories of Lesage, and the comedy of Marivaux, are not for this sketch, which must pass back to the record of satire proper and literary criticism.

Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, in his lifetime usually called Despréaux¹ (1636-1711), was born in Paris, and sprang from a middle-class family of Boileau-Despréaux. lawyers and officials. A small independence enabled him, after a short experience of the law, to give himself to his destiny of satirist and critic. He was never the petrified personage of romantic legend, but a positive cheerful soul, not at bottom highly poetical, fond of good talk, wit, free company, and practical jesting; caustic, honest, and in his own way undeceivable. Between 1659 and 1667 he composed nine *Satires*, the *Discours sur la Satire* (1668), and also nine *Epîtres* (1668 to 1677) which are less aggressive in stamp. The Fifth and Sixth Epistles are Boileau's description of himself. Others are devoted to immense and sincere praises of the king. Boileau's gratitude for protection received, and his sense for a great character, may well excuse some of his excess, though they cannot excuse his chief poetical mistake, the *Ode sur la Prise de Namur*.

Boileau's task, in this group of poems, is threefold.

¹ *Œuvres*, ed. Gidel, 1880; with preface by Brunetière, 1889 (whose art. "Boileau" in *Grande Encyclopédie* is valuable). Reprint of 1701 ed., ed. A. Pauly, 2 vols., 1894. See the study of *Boileau* by G. Lanson, 1892, in *Grands Ecr. fr.*

First, he practises descriptive satire in the spirit of a naturalist. His portraits of Paris (First, 1661-74.
I. Parisian
satire. Sixth, and Third Satires), with its street perils, its orgies, its types, its reputations,¹ are without fault in the hard bright vigour of their definition. His mould is the Latin *pedestris sermo*, and he is of the school of Horace, though he has more nerve and anger than Horace. But he never tries the splendid and clamorous flight of Juvenal or D'Aubigné. Several of his pieces are imitations, or transpositions of an ancient poem to a modern climate, such as became rife in England later. To the whole group is attached the burlesque heroic poem *Le Lutrin* (1674-1683), telling the wars waged between the vanities of certain clerics as to the position that a reading-desk is to occupy in a church. The epical conventions of the dream, the goddess of discord, the detailed combat, are all used with riotous energy, and the poem is written with excellent temper and humour. It differs from Tassoni's or Pope's poems of the same genus, for its first intention is to be a mordant farce on the manners and temper of ecclesiastics, rather than to gibbet particular persons or literary styles. Through all these poems there pierces the proper aim of the satirist, to classify men by their natural, and not their current, values.

Hence, secondly, Boileau writes in order to destroy the literary nullities who are high in reputation during

¹ Satire I. was the first written (1660) and the earliest printed (1666) in the batch; *Œuvres diverses* (including *Satires* partly changed), 1674, 1683, 1694, 1701.

the early part of the reign. Molière modelled his 2. *Iconoclasm: Alceste*, so far as that "misanthrope" is *Chapelain*. a hater of bad poets, upon his friend Boileau. The victims were slaughtered with an Odyssean sureness of aim, their works have seldom been read since, and many of their names would not be remembered but for Boileau having dealt with them. It has been impossible to revive much interest even in those to whom he was somewhat unfair. These names cannot be enumerated fully, but may be classed. The most eminent of them is that of Jean Chapelain (1595-1674), an organiser of the French Academy, the condemner of the *Cid*, the writer of the popular and worthless epic *La Pucelle* (1656). Chapelain, during the third quarter of the century, was not only the official dispenser of the king's interested bounty to learned Europe, but a kind of dowager critic-in-ordinary, who had much reading and some literary judgment, who had really done something for the language and was very high in authority until Boileau arose against him. But in poetry he was a pretender, and the other makers of the epics published in the fifties, Desmarests, Le Moyne, and the rest, suffered with him. Empty light verse, further, of the wiredrawn gallant kind, was condemned in the person of Cotin; burlesque vulgarity and frivolity in Scarron, whose courage and real talent did not mollify Boileau; insipid or senile drama in Quinault and Pradon. In this campaign Boileau is far from good-tempered. But one work of his in prose is like a piece of Molière in gay freedom and humour. This Lucianic dialogue,

Des Héros de Roman, has been alluded to already. The heroes of the Scudéry and La Calprenède romances are discovered by the Parisian visiting Hades to be not heroes at all, but only tricked-up "bourgeois de son quartier." Horatius Cocles making light impromptus to Clélie, and Diogenes describing the famous "Carte de Tendre," are the companions of the masquing valets in *Les Précieuses ridicules*, and have likewise escaped from dying with the fashion that they deride.

Boileau could not forgive those whom he annihilated, and returned often to the charge; but he was

3. *Prophecy*: not, like Pope, moved by personal soreness. *the great classics*. He was filled with an indignant discernment between what was good in literature and what

was worse. His third aim was to distinguish by his praise some of the great classics of the future. They were his own friends, it is true; but these friends were Racine and Molière; besides La Fontaine, whose *Fables* he does not mention, but whose *Joconde* he approved. He announced them, he gave them very sound advice; he perhaps saved them from working out their weaknesses; and he honoured their superiority to himself in creative ease. Together with the ancients, they furnished him a living embodiment of perfect art, whose canons it was his next attempt to formulate.

The *Art poétique* (1674) consists of four books or

4. *Art poétique*: cantos. The first, after glorifying reason, *Boileau's art*. good sense, and the harmony of verse, re-

lates their inauguration by Malherbe and their progress

in French poetry. The second and third cantos go through the various poetical forms, giving the counsels for each, and sometimes its supposed history. The fourth offers maxims, moral as well as artistic, to the poet. The strange irregular area of Boileau's own sympathies is perhaps the most curious thing about the book. He is by no means, as has vulgarly been supposed, a partisan of frozen correctness. He is stirred by Homer and Pindar, and by Longinus (whose work he put into French). He looks for heart and passion, and for all the transporting part of poetry. But he neither knows nor understands Ronsard and the sixteenth century, and this is only one field of his ignorance, which extends to the English and Spanish dramas and to many of the greater Italian classics. What he truly grasped was the rise in France of the desire for impeccable literary form. He desires it himself. His own verse is firm and monumental, and its ruling tone is intellectual. The sculpturing of his periods is often that of a master. His chosen, though not his invariable, manner is described by himself in well-remembered lines :—

"Souvent j'habille en vers une maligne prose ;
C'est par là que je vauz, si je vauz quelque chose."

To this intermediate form, so expressive, as has been said, of the poetry of classicism, he usually keeps. Hence his variety and dexterity, like his natural fancy, remain far below those of Pope. But both of them have a strain of descriptive precision which has strayed to them from the novel, or anticipates it.

Wherever character can invigorate style, Boileau is the superior of Pope.

In 1677, having already had a pension from the king, Boileau was made historiographer-royal in company with Racine. We have not the results; but it was the signal to him for a kind of retirement from letters. During his last thirty-five years he produced sundry additional epistles, satires, and epigrams. The Tenth Epistle (*À mes Vers*) completes his modest and clear-sighted portrait of himself. He invents one new and pointed application of the *pedestris sermo*—namely, the disputation. The Twelfth Satire, posthumously published, on *L'Équivoque*, is the sharp protest of a layman, but of a layman nourished on *Les Provinciales*; and the Twelfth Epistle, *Sur l'Amour de Dieu*, is in poetical pitch very near the versified reasonings of Dryden. These and other wars, including one with Perrault that will recur presently, Boileau waged from his retreat at Auteuil. His letters, many of which are written to Racine, show his uncompromising principle, and his keen spirit, stronger in affection than in sensibility.

Boileau was not accepted as supreme among critics, neither did he stand alone. Literary criticism was in the air, just as “philosophy” was in the air a century later. At no time of the world can it have been so integral a part of the best conversation and of general thought. Hence the letters of Mme. de Sévigné and Bussy are full of it; Bossuet and Nicole warn their flocks off the comedy of

Literary criticism in the air.

Molière; the dramatists themselves, whose plays were read as well as beheld, are full of apologies and explanations, addressed to a great, curious, and intelligent society. The prefaces of Corneille, wherein he transacts so strangely with the rules and unities; those of Racine, written in his most biting prose—are only the most important of the kind, and their epilogue is the curious *Réflexions sur la Poétique* of Fontenelle. This very sophistical work is vitiated by the attempt to decry Racine in favour of Corneille on the strength of first principles, but is significant and full of subtleties that were new to critical thought. All these utterances are occasional and rather inconsequent. Three works, however, which will be cited in different connections, stand out from the rest. They are all by masters, and to study them together with Boileau is almost to span the critical horizons of the seventeenth century. They are: the section in La Bruyère's *Caractères* on *Les Ouvrages de l'Esprit*; the essays written between 1670-80 by Saint-Evremond;¹ and Fénelon's Letters to the French Academy, with his *Dialogues sur l'Eloquence*. But the average cultured judgment of the time is well seen in the group that may roughly be called the

¹ Saint-Evremond (1613-1703) is at first sight hard to group. The friend of Waller and Rochester, resident in England for his last forty years, might seem to fall within these pages. But he left France in 1661, and his memories and theories, if not wholly his style, are anterior; nor did he ever greatly change. He holds to Corneille as against Racine, and his free-thinking is of the older kind. We name him here for certain traits of classicism that he captures for us. See the enlightened study of A. Bourgoïn, *Les Maîtres de la critique au xvii. Siècle*, Paris, 1899—both on Saint-Evremond and on La Bruyère.

reverend critics. They are sound humanists, they incline to the *à priori* criticism of rule and canon, and at least two of them are men of wit and the world, correspondents of Bussy-Rabutin. One of these, Father René Rapin, was a scholar and profuse writer, and his old-fashioned *Comparaisons* of Homer and Virgil, Demosthenes and Cicero, and other pairs of classics,

are neat and not narrow-minded. We find

Les RR. Pères.

him asking Bussy whether an epic is really impossible in French, and receiving, as a proof that it is impossible, the names of the epics, published by Chapelain, Saint-Sorlin, and many others in the fifties, and already (1672) extinct. Both writers agree in laying the fault on the monotony of the Alexandrine verse. A judge of yet greater sagacity, consulted and esteemed by the chief classical writers, was Father Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702), a real authority on French diction and grammar, and a writer of point and elegance. His works were widely translated and read abroad. The best of them is his *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671), which contains a signal tribute to the European popularity of French at that date, and a keen comparison of French with other tongues, of course at their expense. His *Manière de bien penser sur les Ouvrages de l'Esprit* (1687, in English 1705) was read everywhere, and can be read still. His name will recur among those who formed and cleared the language academically. Another book, the *Traité du Poème épique* of Father Rénée Bossu (1675), was popular in England, and elaborately expands the principles that Aristotle had or should have

had on epic poetry. This exposition was written when the French epic was dead ; but Bossu drags into his theory all the commonplaces of the new age, and is assisted by nature, reason, and antiquity, to discover what should be the conduct, the machines, the manners, and the characters of an epic poem. His ideas filtered into Dennis and Addison, and in their works his canons are found inadvertently measuring the conformity of Milton to a just poetic.

We call them commonplaces, these watch-cries of classicism, *reason, nature, good sense, the way of the* *The formulae: ancients*, which Boileau proclaims so lucidly *their meaning.* in his *Art poétique* and elsewhere ; words that came to be used more or less as interchangeable by Boileau himself, by his friends, by Saint-Evremond in his essays, by Fénelon in his letters to the Academy, and everywhere in criticism. But though they were not fully analysed, and often gave a rather mystical comfort to those who used them, the whole essence and defence of classicism is in them, and their roots are deep and stubborn. Some of the connections between literature and the philosophical movement of Descartes have been noted in the first chapter of this sketch, and some of the æsthetic embodiments of *Reason* described. *Good sense* is reason organised and grown intuitive, ready to distinguish between the sound and the unsound in life or books, and to avoid the excessive or absurd. The empire of this conception over the eighteenth century is part of the story of the next volume. *Nature*, moreover, meant human nature, and to follow nature is to describe mankind justly and

without swerving; ¹ mankind, said these critics, as he is, always and everywhere; *sub specie æternitatis*, in the words of the philosopher who was then a name of horror, Spinoza; mankind, we should rather say now, as he is always and everywhere in society, in the world of cities, politics, coteries, and gallantries. Those who still speak of the "universality" of Racine and his companions, in the sense that we use the word of Dante and Shakespeare, are simply too much wrapped up in French literature. At the most the term can be applied to Molière.

The way of the ancients; this of course was no discovery of classicism, but of the Renaissance. But to see reason and nature and good sense in *Antiquity again.* the way of the ancients,—this was the turn given by classicism to the discovery. "On ne saurait," says La Bruyère, "en écrivant, rencontrer le parfait, et, s'il se peut, surpasser les anciens, que par leur imitation." "La nature est admirable partout," says Saint-Evremond; and he leans to the belief that the ancients represented it best. Good sense too is theirs, though poetry "does not adjust itself too well to the measure of good sense." Boileau, who was less limited in view than Saint-Evremond, and loved Homer, Pindar, and Longinus, preaches, though not too clearly, that the ancients are perfect, if not in every kind. This formulation, right or wrong, is of twofold in-

¹ "Et maintenant il ne faut pas
Quitter la nature d'un pas."

The famous lines of La Fontaine were written after seeing *Les Échevins*.

terest. In the first place, it stands at the beginnings of modern literary criticism, and poetic again begins to become, more than it had ever been since Aristotle, an accredited branch of æsthetic. Secondly, the meeting of the intellectual streams that we signify by rationalism and classicism is seen at this point. There is a momentary harmony between philosophy and art.

But the meeting is also a collision, the harmony is soon disturbed; and the dispute between the ancients and the moderns is the result.¹

Rationalism, in its Cartesian form, we saw was liable to slight the past; its programme was to strike forth, imperturbably, from the individual reason and accept the results. But reason, in its exploration of chaos, comes to find that a part of the discarded past is itself the embodiment of reason; and is so, not only in the region of literary art, but in the expression of universal truth! Thus the individual reason is landed in a kind of suicide. Now one thing that made this conclusion easier was the consonance of certain qualities of Latin literature with those encouraged by Cartesian method: explicitness, order, and definition. But the opposition between the modern departure of thought and the old admirations of the world was not so easily got over. For one thing, a new literature had sprung up, abundant in fresh forms, eminent in shapeliness, occupied with humankind, and in some sense the pro-

¹ See H. Rigault, *Histoire de la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, 1856; Brunetière, *Manuel*, pp. 252-256; and *L'Évolution de la Critique*, 1892, Lecture iv.

perty and glory of the greatest of monarchs; an Augustan literature, as people were never tired of calling it. Pride, then, the pride of fresh performance, assisted the Cartesian movement to check the cult of antiquity. And there was a third check, which also was, or seemed to be, a philosophical one. This was the false analogy of the advance of science.

How false, it is not superfluous even now to say. Those who think to trace an advance, not only in the sum of positive knowledge, but in human behaviour and institutions, are always arrested in the region of art. In art there is no progress. There is no evidence, unless it be in the art of music, to show the least increase in the fund of conceptive or executive power from one generation to another. There may be a greater bulk of middling achievement and better education, but the great men are not greater. Their powers die with them, and are not added to posterity. On the other hand, all dogmas about the permanent decay of art and genius are equally futile, for nature is inexhaustible, not less than capricious, in her dole of capacity.

The skirmishing around this issue, which was stated very dimly, was begun by a light and rather vain onrider of literature, Charles Perrault,¹ who has already been duly credited with his fairy tales. In 1687 he read a foolish poem, *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand*, to the Academy, exalting the writers of France, bad and

*Ancients and
moderns:*

1. *Boileau*

and Perrault.

¹ A selection, containing the *Contes des Fées* (very often reprinted, see p. 87 *supra*), the memoirs, and some of the poems, 1826.

good alike, above their several rivals in antiquity. During the next ten years Perrault was encouraged to produce his dialogues, *Parallèles des Anciens et des Modernes*, where he works out what he thought the law of progress, but may be termed the fallacy of accumulation. It is an argument from the literature of knowledge to that of power; and the introduction of printing, of Christianity, and much else, is brought in by the way. The first contribution of Boileau (who had discovered so many of the “moderns”—such as Racine—that he upheld the ancients with some embarrassment) is to be seen in his *Réflexions sur Longin* (1694), which are rather violently delivered than well reasoned. But in his *Lettre à M. Perrault* (1700) he buries the hatchet, regains his critical discretion, and marks out some of the true conquests of the moderns with sufficient nicety. He keeps to the Romans; and his contention is true, that in tragedy and philosophy, not to name the new kind of “poem in prose” called a romance, the age of Louis XIV. is above comparison with that of Augustus. But Boileau did not come near the root of the matter. The debate had already been turned by the last French writer of high mark who remains to be described.

Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle¹ (1657-1757) stands, with Bayle, well over the brink of eighteenth-century thought; he lived a terribly long time, and links the science and wit of the “grand siècle” with Voltaire. He might have been

2. Fontenelle.

¹ *Œuvres*, 1st ed., 1724; also 8 vols., 1790, and 3 vols., 1818. The *Entrée des Sciences*, and *Eloges* (e.g., in the Garnier selection), often reprinted.

reckoned in the history of philosophy, or among the de-coctors of science, or the wits; but he may equally well close the roll of the critics. Fontenelle was a nephew of Corneille, and began his career with operas, plays, and pastorals, most of which designate him as not a little of a fribble; and as such he is duly inscribed by La Bruyère in the medallion-portrait of "Cydias." But in 1683 his *Dialogues des Morts* had begun to come out, and though in some of these, especially such as concern love and intrigue, Fontenelle is still enough of a fribble, he is in others much more. He dedicates them to Lucian; he has freshness, unexpected style, and sting. Alexander and Phryne compare the greatness of their respective spheres of conquest; Molière expounds to Paracelsus, and Raymond Lully to Artemisia, the many folds of human self-deception. The tone is that of an elegant universal faithlessness, and the quality is like that of dry sand, fine and irritant. The dialogue of Socrates and Montaigne, and the *Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes* (1688), show that Fontenelle does not crudely apply the conception of scientific progress to art. The moderns, says Montaigne, are old men who have gained nothing by experience, and human folly is a constant quantity. On that footing, ingeniously replies Socrates, how then are the ancients any better than we? Nature, it is more fully explained in the *Digression*, is everywhere equally fertile, or equally barren. "Les siècles ne mettent aucune différence naturelle entre les hommes." If one land differs from another, it is purely for reasons of climate,—physical advantages in the nourishment of

the brain. Here we have a gleam of the later materialism. But, on the other hand, the ancients came first; they exhausted many of the possible errors. And if they are superior in poetry and eloquence, this, says the sceptic, is only because such things need a certain vivacity of imagination, which soon comes to its height and is over. It is the "essential vice of poetry to be good for nothing." Science, on the other hand, a serious thing, requires the amassed training of centuries, and each age only learns with effort the accumulations of the last. Fontenelle, clearly, has a sound conception of science. His notions of art need not further be pursued. Like others of his time, he thinks that the Roman poets and orators are superior to the Greek.

Fontenelle is best known for his dealings with science and its practitioners. He held obstinately to a belief in the vortices of Descartes. But he
His science. was a great vulgariser of sound science for the polite and feminine world; he made it the fashion. His *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Mondes* (1686) are insufferably elegant, but had an immense vogue. As perpetual Secretary to the Academy of Sciences, he delivered a great number of *Eloges* on its members, generations of whom he survived. These lay counterparts to the "oraison funèbre" are a running record of the achievements of French science, and the amplest of them are on Leibniz and Newton, who were honorary members of the Academy. They are a pattern of deft and measured panegyric, and they show the mental grasp and seriousness of Fontenelle, as well as

his curious sleight of thought and subtlety of point, which is apt to crumble like that of an oversharpened pencil.

The dispute over the ancients and the moderns—by no means, it has been shown, futile and academic—rankled on in the latter years of the reign.

3. *The epilogue.* The chief interest of this epilogue is the growing distrust of poetry, already peering out in Saint-Evremond and Fontenelle. Antoine Houdar de la Motte, by his verse translation of 1714, corrected the *Iliad* into a production of elegance and wit; and Mme. Dacier, whose prose version he had used, and who knew a good deal better, retorted with honest heat. There was much discussion by many pens; but the next generation had not enough poetry to perceive the larger critical issues that were concerned.

This account may close with some remarks on the instrument by which the victories of classicism were attained. The French language was made not only by its masters and by the nation. *The regulation of French* More than any other, it has passed through the hands of official lapidaries; it has been a State affair. Its geographical expansion at the cost of Latin was greatly due to the system and tenacity with which it was regulated. The influence exercised on French by the grammarians and the Academy was very mixed, but very great. While the dreams harboured by Dryden and Swift of an English Academy ended with the dreamers, whose self-discipline and whose style have made them the real English Academy, it was otherwise in France.

For the language moved forward under the pull of divergent forces. Some of the great writers, like La

Fontaine and Molière, made for novelty,
after a contest.

freedom, and the happy revival of archaism. The academic canon, on the other hand, was much falsified by the conception of language as a stationary thing, unable or unpermitted to form by friction and accretion. Some of the best judges, like Bouhours, were all for restriction and prescription of idiom, on the old lines of Vaugelas. Scholars like Guillaume Ménage (who had an unwonted knowledge of older French, but marred his work by a taste for puerile etymology) had some authority, but less. The *Grammar* of Port-Royal, chiefly due to Antoine Arnauld, was a signal attempt, by Cartesian first principles, to regulate and explain grammar and locution on a purely logical basis. But these divergent efforts do not show the real conflict so well as the history of the chief dictionaries.

The "siècle," or "demi-siècle," was an age of dictionaries, which varied between the aim of recording, and

Dictionaries; that of restricting, the living tongue. One
the Academy. of the best, that gave the meaning of French words in French, without reference to any other language, was that of Richelet (1680), which was fastidious in most of its admissions. Ten years later came the *Dictionnaire universel* of Furetière. The frantic war waged between the author and the Academy turned not merely on the question of official monopoly, but on the principle of the work. The historian of Vollicon and the Place Maubert was not likely to be

stingy in the matter of vocabulary; and his book, the preface to which is very lucid and notable, is a great treasury of positive fact, as well as a lexicon, and went for something in the plan of the *Encyclopédie*, long after. The *Dictionary* issued by the French Academy in 1694, after thirty-seven years' labour, was much stricter in its tests for admission. It was inconveniently arranged under the roots of the words, and not by the alphabet; its claim to legislate was contested even in its own time; and it worked on the implicit fallacy that the language was fixed. Still its prestige was not small, and not ill-merited. It entered closely into shades of usage, and recorded a great number of words invented during the century itself. And it partially fixed a standard spelling, in the face of phonetic and other craze-mongers, who then, as now, were rampant under the least encouragement. The best comment on the *Dictionary* is that of Fénelon in his *Mémoire sur les Occupations de l'Académie française* (1713), and in his *Lettre à M. Dacier* (1714). He is more liberal than the Academy in his acceptance of the rich old words that were being ostracised by its labours. At the same time, he says that the completion of the *Dictionary* is the one thing wanting to make French the general tongue of Europe, or even of the world. The flower of Fénelon is perhaps in these pages; not so much when he pleads for the establishment of an official Rhetoric, and also a Poetic, founded on knowledge and good sense, as when he demands, above all, for a literary work, the supreme qualities of singleness and composition. "Whoso does not feel the beauty

and force of this unity, of this order, has not yet seen broad daylight, but only the shadows in the cavern of Plato." There speaks the whole, or the best, of French classicism; and there is its eternal message to the art of literature.¹

¹ For a full account of the linguistics, see F. Brunot, *La Langue de 1660 à 1700*, in Petit de Julleville, vol. v. *ad fin.* M. Brunot gives (p. 800 *sq.*) some details as to the usurpation of French upon Latin for inscriptional and other objects: see our note (p. 318 *post*) on the decay of Latin.

CHAPTER IV.

ENGLISH PROSE 1660-1700.¹

THE MENTAL CHANGE AND THE PERSONAL—THE ROYAL SOCIETY; LETTERS; SCIENCE—NEWTON AND OTHERS—SOCIOLOGY—SUPERSTITION; GLANVILL AND T. BURNET—INSULARITY OF PHILOSOPHY; HOBBS—POLITICAL THEORY—CAMBRIDGE AND PLATO—H. MORE—CUDWORTH—PROTESTANTS—BUNYAN—ANGLICAN LEARNING AND PREACHING—BARROW—SOUTH—TILLOTSON—IMPORTANCE AND CAREER OF LOCKE: MENTAL CHARACTER; RELIGION; STYLE—HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES—GILBERT BURNET—SECULAR PERSONAL LITERATURE—LITERARY CRITICISM—DRYDEN, AS A CRITIC—TWO LITTLE CRITICS—MODERN PROSE FIXED: ITS CONSTITUENTS.

IN France, then, philosophy itself is stayed, the method and principles of Descartes are stayed; their final applications have to wait. But reason
The mental change penetrates society; classicism flowers, and the Cartesian impulse is part of its nurture. The

¹ Chaps. iv.-vi. See, for the chronicle of style and form, E. Gosse, *Eighteenth Century Literature*, 1897, and other works; for the intellectual movement, shown from a cosmopolitan point of view, H. Hettner, *Literaturgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, pt. i., *Die englische Literatur von 1660-1770*, Brunswick, 5th ed., 1894; for the material and social groundwork of letters, A. Beljaune, *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre au xviii^e Siècle*, 2nd ed., 1897. For

main affair is literature—expression, rather than pure thought. Classicism came speedily in France; there was less poetry to resist it, and the social order helped it. But in England, during the reign of Dryden, pseudo-science and poetry are seen changing and yielding; science, reason, versified rhetoric, and prose appear, and this is the prelude to our classical age of Pope and Swift. The next chapter relates the transformation in poetry and drama. But first we should know the literary expression of the intellectual history; and this is seen best in the prose. It is (1) a history of *concentration*, not of dispersion. A number of scattered lines draw together in Locke, up to whom can be traced the advance, amidst lapses, defeats, and aberrations, of reason, which is at last explicit, but is still, as usual in England, affirmed much more fully than it is applied. And therefore (2) the process is highly *impersonal*; it is carried on by many minds in random complicity, as yet only partially gathered in the capital, speaking as yet to different sectarian audiences, and not to

brief surveys, see R. Garnett, *The Age of Dryden*, 1895, and G. Saintsbury, *Short History of English Literature*, 1898. The monographs in the *English Men of Letters* series; the articles, with their bibliographies, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, by the two editors, and many others; the selections and judgments in Ward's *English Poets* and Craik's *English Prose Selections*, by many hands,—need no praise or recounting. Most of the poets are found, of course ill-edited, in Chalmers's collection, vols. viii.-xii., and some of the minor men are reprinted there only. Edition of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, by J. H. Millar, 3 vols., 1897; and of Thackeray's *Lectures on the English Humourists*, by E. Regel, Halle, 1884, &c. (with notes and bibliographies).

that excitable resonant one that listened in the time of Anne.

The change, too, at first sight, notwithstanding figures like Newton or Bunyan, strikes us as a loss
and the of vivid personalities—the kind of loss that
personal. is the hardest tax on our faith; and the sense of it is stronger when we look to the survivors. The comments in *Samson Agonistes* (1670) or in the last sermons of Jeremy Taylor (died 1667) are those of a dispossessed race. Clarendon, who wrote late, was formed in the political struggle. England has no Bossuet who survives into the courtly period and learns its lessons without loss of dignity. The type changes, as the logical, prosaic impulse enroaches; and the exceptions, like More, Thomas Burnet, or Fox, who would be the natural voice of a time of imagination and inwardness, are left stranded. They refuse to pay the price, that is exacted by the new spirit, of obedience to the regulative reason; they will not disengage their thoughts and fancies from a formulation that is doomed; and so they are silenced and slighted in literature,—but not for ever: their essence, an eternal element in man, comes up again and asks for rational embodiment; *incipiunt in corpora velle reverti*.

Voltaire called the seventeenth century “le siècle des Anglais,” chiefly because of our physical science. This
The Royal Society: Letters; Science. is linked with the history of letters, through the energies of which the Royal Society was the centre. It is well known how a band of private researchers, or “the invisible College,”

persisted obscurely at Oxford through the war; how the Society was founded in 1662 under royal countenance; and how it gave life to the Baconian “ministrations,” and to other prophetic dreams. But its intellectual plan made it in four ways a larger thing than any other academy of sciences. First, it recognised the whole kingdom of knowledge, and almost any sort of expertness or mental eminence. Aubrey and Waller belong as well as Sydenham; Dryden belongs; Mr Pepys becomes president. John Evelyn (1620-1706), who wrote the older, dignified, buckram kind of English at his leisure, had an acquaintance with architecture, numismatics, and navigation, and his *Sylva* (1664) is scientific in the broader sense. Cowley, though not a member himself, is found planning a college for the advancement of experimental science, with its “four professors itinerant, and sixteen resident, none married,” and all of them “keeping an inviolable friendship one with another.” And this organised alliance between science, scholarship, art, and letters found expression, secondly, in the explicit use and formation of a plain style. The first historian of the Society, Bishop Sprat¹ (1667), himself an amateur of knowledge and modern in his prose, sets forth this aim; and the nature of the change, which runs through all letters, and was actually before one of the Society’s committees, will be noted again below. Thirdly, science is in strict alliance with defensive, and usually

¹ The *History of the Royal Society of London, for the Improving of Natural Knowledge*. The *Philosophical Transactions* begin 1665. T. Birch, *History*, &c., 1756. C. R. Weld, *A History*, &c., 1848.

with Anglican, theology. The new laws and facts that are won almost invariably serve as matter for apologetics *à posteriori*. The methods of science are not transferred to speculation, but its results are harmonised into supporting received articles. But, fourthly, the Society worked for that comprehensiveness in religion that the wider spirits of the Church, Hales and Chillingworth, had guarded. It "openly professed," says Sprat, "not to lay the foundation of an English, Scotch, Irish, Popish, or Protestant philosophy; but a philosophy of mankind." Hence the weight of glory, amongst all the countries, lay with England, for the broadest ideal and achievement in this province.

Sir Isaac Newton¹ (1642-1727), the discoverer of the differential and integral calculus, or "method of *Newton and others.* fluxions"; of the laws of universal gravitation (*Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, 1687); and of the decomposition of white light (*Optics*, published 1704), altered all future conceptions of the physical universe. Newton always writes a prose which is without decoration, and which takes no thought for itself. The pressure of an immense brooding mind can be felt at all points, whether Newton be on his own ground, or whether (*Letters to Bentley*, 1692) he argues an intelligent agent from the discovered motions of the planets, or whether (*Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel*) he moves

¹ *Opera omnia* (incomplete), ed. Horsley, 5 vols., 1779-85; Sir D. Brewster's *Life* (1831, 1875), and (chiefly) his *Memoirs* (1855, 1860) of Newton; Fontenelle's *Eloge*, 1728. Bibliography, G. J. Gray, 1888.

amongst chimeras. "Did blind chance know there was light, and what was its refraction, and fit the eyes of all creatures, after the most curious manner, to make use of it?" The accent is there of a great writer, and Newton is never tedious in his lucidity like his elder contemporary, Robert Boyle¹ (1627-1691), who wrote with an "unreprieved prolixity" and pompous volubility (which won the mockery of Swift), so that even his abridgments are serious things. But his criticism, in *The Sceptical Chymist* (1661), on the Aristotelian conception of the four elements, was fatal to alchemy, and made a crisis in chemical theory. Boyle's positive work in physics, as in chemistry, is also of the first importance. He pressed the argument from design profusely in his *Occasional Reflections* and elsewhere. The names of John Mayow, another chemist, the experimenter on combustion and respiration, and of Robert Hooke, the mathematician and physicist, fall, like that of Nehemiah Grew (eminent in vegetable anatomy), just outside letters. The classifications of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, insects, and plants, made by John Ray (1627-1705), greatly with the assistance of Francis Willughby, are often in admirably curt Latin, and were decisive in the history of zoology and botany. Ray's *Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation* (1691)² is in Eng-

¹ *Works*, ed. Birch, 6 vols., 1772 (ed. 2). Abridgments by Boulton (3 vols., 1699) and Shaw (3 vols., 1725).

² Editions down to 1827. *A Collection of English Proverbs* (1670; 1855 in Bohn's Libraries) seems the only other work of Ray's in modern reprint. *Correspondence*, ed. for Ray Society by E. Lankester, 1848.

lish, and is in style and title representative of the whole school; and his descriptions, especially those of animals, are plain and masterly.

Such were some of the heads of the "Visible Church of Philosophy,"—the baptism given to the Society by

Sociology. the finest spirit amongst its economists, Sir

William Petty; whose *Treatise of Taxes*¹ (1662) is said to be one of the first works to discriminate wealth and money; who by choice expresses himself in "terms of number, weight, and measure," in his *Political Arithmetic* and other books on "vital statistics"; but who is also a humane and tolerant thinker and happy writer, in advance of his time. Sir Josiah Child (1630-1699) handled exchange and interest in a work finally (1690) called *A New Discourse of Trade*. These and Sir Dudley North, whose *Discourse on Trade* (1691) is important, stand out from the pullulation of tract-makers, never yet perhaps recounted, who write on the Dutch and Eastern markets and the clipping of the coinage. Few of these authors are distinctive: for colour and fancy, for literature, we tarry gratefully with two personages, strange enough survivors of the Old Guard of superstition.

¹ *Treatise on Taxes*, chapter on *Penalties*: "As for perpetual imprisonment by sentence, it seems but the same with death itself, to be executed by nature itself, weakened by such diseases as close living, sadness, solitude, and reflection upon past and better conditions doth commonly engender; nor do men sentenced here want to live longer, though they be longer in dying." This is good as anything in Hales or Locke, and has lost no force. Petty's life has been very thoroughly written by his descendant, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, 1895.

“Those that dare not bluntly say there is no God, content themselves, for a fair type and introduction, to deny there are spirits and witches.”

*Superstition;
Glanvill and
T. Burnet.*

Joseph Glanvill (1636-1680), from such deliverances, from his opinions on sympathetic needles and powders, and from his rolling language, might wrongly seem, although F.R.S. and Chaplain-in-Ordinary to Charles II., to be merely a relic. But in other ways he is the voice of some of the new revulsions. It is in *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681, shaped from earlier works) that he pleads for the possibility and reality of witches. But *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661), turned into *Scep̄sis Scientifica* (1665),¹ is at once a Cartesian and a Baconian attack on the Schools, and promulgates a “scepticism that’s the only way to science.” This attitude Glanvill arranges amicably with his cult of Plato, and with a liberal Anglicanism that is much out of love with “zeal.” He is anxious to detect design in nature, and the few “vitals” of religion in the early reasonable ages of the Church. He is assured, in the midst of his scepticism, that the unfallen Adam must have had vision of telescopic power. Most of his opinions can be seen in his essays, and in his *Sum of my Lord Bacon’s New Atlantis*, which agreeably relates the condition of religion in the “Bensalem” of the emparadised man of science. Another outlying mind of yet wilder composition is that of Thomas Burnet, master of the Charterhouse (c. 1635-1715). The first part of

¹ The edition of John Owen, 1885, contains in its introduction the best account of Glanvill’s mental physiognomy.

his *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, which describes the universal Deluge as well as Paradise, came out in 1684, three years after its Latin original; the second part (*De Conflagratione Mundi*) came out both in Latin and English in 1689. Burnet, who was assailed by the orthodox for allegorising the Fall, calculates and proves like one in a dream, and his proofs are such as satisfy in dreams. In the *Conflagration* the dream becomes a nightmare—a flamboyant picture of doomsday, lurid and ill-composed, but not without a certain rank splendour. When imagination was at famine prices Burnet's quality was rated yet higher, and his books were as solemnly controverted by geologists as they were sincerely propounded. Addison prophesied in Latin alcaics that Burnet's writing would last till the great doom, *heu socio peritura mundo*; and an interest even yet attaches to the works of which this prediction is made, and to their sounding style.

Survivors of Browne and Digby, these refreshing vagrant fantasts, find few articulate friends except among the divines of Cambridge; science hurries past such disregarded outposts.

*Insularity of
philosophy:
Hobbes.*

But, away from science, the course of English thought until Locke is notably insular. The Restoration and the Revolution pass without the seminal foreign minds touching us deeply. The "Cartesian" elements in English letters, like the taste for clearness, and the consideration of man as untouched by outward nature, seem of independent and native source. Our programme of toleration fits readily into the capacious scheme of the *Tractatus Theologico-*

Politicus (translated in 1689). for it is part of the same mental movement; but Spinoza is seldom cited with understanding, though he is the target of the Cambridge divines, and also of Howe. Malebranche found his translators and decoctors afterwards on this side the Channel, and the dealings of Leibniz with Locke and Clarke are later still. English thought was mainly satisfied to reckon with Hobbes, who even after his death (1679) irritated all speculation throughout a smaller and less convulsed age than that which formed him; for he belonged, as Ranke has said, to the confusions and throes of the mid-century. He disquieted the Crown with a history, other than divine, of its rights. The splendour of his anti-clerical irony and the destructive implications of his ethics were a scandal to the Church; he succeeded Macchiavelli as the pocket-companion of the stage villain: "an excellent fellow," says the hypocrite in *A Constant Couple* (1699). All were "thundering upon Hobbes' steel cap," from Burnet, who, as a Whig and a bishop, hated him, and Clarendon, to the mathematical Wallis and the learning-lumbered Cudworth; and from these to the Rev. John Eachard, whose *Dialogues* have a certain street wit. They, and heavy theologians like Tenison and Bramhall, flung themselves on this great man, the founder in England of the natural study of mind, and the co-founder with Hooker¹ of our political philosophy. His argument has been renewed in the Darwinian theory of the stronger.

¹ See *Hobbes*, by G. Croom Robertson, in "Blackwood's Philosophical Classics," 1886,—a pattern book of its scale and kind.

The weightiest answer to Hobbes' political views, and the only one that marks any noticeable advance towards Locke, was the *De Legibus Natura*¹ *Political theory.* (1672) of Richard Cumberland, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough. This is a worthy sequel to Hooker, and works on the lines of Grotius, in the spirit of observation and science, founding a plea for natural morality on a purely philosophic basis. It is much more ethical than political, but lies on the favourite English hunting-ground between the two sciences. It had, being in Latin, some foreign influence. Other political theorists also fill the interval. Milton and Harrington, or Ludlow, might have subscribed to much of Algernon Sidney's *Discourses concerning Government*, published in 1698, long after the martyrdom of the author. Sidney is a doctrinaire of the lost nobler kind, tough and individual, a Roman in theory and temper; his style is ungraceful, being half-carved, half-left in the rough, and it is less modern than his line of thought. Marvell's² *Account of the Growth of Arbitrary Government* was the work of a republican who had relapsed, after an interval of hope for the restored monarchy, into a fiercer version of his old convictions. Pamphlets in favour of divine right still issued from dark places, and the figment was awkwardly adjusted by Burnet to defend the Revolution. Sidney, and even Locke in the first (1690) of his *Treatises on*

¹ Eng. tr. 1727, 1750; French, 1744, 1757.

² *Works*, ed. Grosart, 1873-75, vols. iii., iv. Here also see *The Rehearsal Transposed*, and *Mr Smirke: the Divine in Mode*, which often escape into humour.

Government, set forth to refute the egregious *Patriarcha* of Sir Robert Filmer, written before the war, but seemingly first printed in 1680. The deducing of "the natural power of kings" from "Adam's private dominion and jurisdiction" was, according to Locke, still worth answering, because it was still the "current divinity" of the pulpit. But in his second *Treatise* (1690) Locke, the friend of the Revolution, dressed in orange the suppositions of Hobbes—"the state of nature," the "law of nature"—and advanced speculation by using these ideas as blank forms on which to inscribe his humane and liberal ethics. He also gave his well-known turn to the theory of the social compact, by making the delegate ruler responsible.

For the rest, philosophy in England before Locke means theology, and of this there are three chief sections, represented by the Cambridge Platonists, the Protestants or Evangelicals of various shades, and the Anglicans. How shall we here pay our dues to the huge smoke-blackened edifice, half-palace and half-prison, of seventeenth-century divinity, in which Time has battered so many sad and ruinous breaches? Certain of those traits and outstanding figures may be noted, that touch on literature.

The divines of Cambridge are rooted among the Spenserians and fantasics; in a common revulsion *Cambridge and* against Hobbes; in the Puritanism of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, their centre; *Plato.* and in the semi-philosophical study of Plato and the Platonists. Hence they keep alive the golden mystical vein in a rational generation; they link the later

Puritans with the humanities, otherwise apt to be slighted; and, in uttering the intimate raptures of personal religion, they have a greater knowledge and scope of emotion, and a more cultured eloquence, than the other Puritans, if less nerve and passion. On Tillotson and other Broad Churchmen their working is all for flexibility and tolerance. It may be from the force of Protestant habit that they are prone to take the whole body of Platonic writings, original or derived, as a kind of second scripture, of nearly equal weight in all its portions. They are, in fact, pre-critical; so that it does injustice to them, and distracts honour from their true service to the religious temper, to claim them as intellectual heralds. Their importance to philosophy might therefore seem to be overstated in Principal Tulloch's book,¹ which is otherwise marked by much equity and sympathy, and is an authority for the lesser figures, like Worthington, among them, as well as for the larger. Many of them fall before our limits, such as their most enraptured preacher John Smith (*Select Discourses*, 1660), and their philosophic pioneer Culverwell (*Light of Nature*, 1652). The career of Benjamin Whichcote, a kind of figurehead to the movement, continues later; but the Platonists may not ill be judged from More and Cudworth.

Henry More² (1614-1687) is a poet foundered in late Spenserian allegory; and a keen analyst of mind and

¹ *Rational Theology in England in the Seventeenth Century*. 2 vols., 1874, ed. 2.

² Prose works not edited after 1712. The poems (*Psychologia* and others), ed. Grosart, 1878.

of "enthusiasm," lost in a fatal quagmire of theosophy and cabbalas. He gathered up the first sheaf of his writings in his volume of 1662, containing *H. More*, *An Antidote against Atheism* (which begins acutely and eloquently), the *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, the Latin letters to Descartes, the long work on the immortality of the soul, and the disquisition on the two mystical meanings evident in the first three chapters of Genesis. His later manuals of metaphysics and Cartesian ethics have died, weighed down rather unjustly by his superstitious works. His *Divine Dialogues* (1668) appears to be the best in form and the most luminous of his books. His turn, as a reader of Plato, for ease and transparency, only partly overcomes his inclination to lengthiness and to a doleful pedantry of Latinised words, which he uses, unlike Browne, with little feeling for their colour. More betrays the attitude, or confusion of attitudes, peculiar to his group; the appeal, for a first line of defence against mere zealots, to reason; and, for a second, against the Hobbist, to "a second principle more noble and inward than reason." And this something, or illumination, he usually phrases in Platonic or Neo-Platonic terms. He further echoes the Anglican appeal to primitive Church practice, and inclines to insist less, after all, on doctrine than on the life of refined contemplation and on the charm of the sequestered saintly character. Herein is his strength, and his own biography is beautiful; but his mind is a turbid crystal, in which we see transient myths, unreconciled opposites, and superstition. "The

greatest difficulty is to give an account whence the bad genii, in their execrable feasts, have their food so formally made into dishes": this is written to Descartes, with whom the Cambridge school came to a certain adjustment.

The head savant and dialectician of the group, Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), though a lumbering writer, had more scholastic and Platonic *Cudworth.* lore than any man of his time, and is also of mark in the history of thought. His first tome, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), is one of the last serious works written in the fearless old fashion of vast quotations and merciless excursions. Its table of contents fills over fifty long columns, and the 900 pages of text only complete one-third of the author's threatened plan. Hence Cudworth hardly gets the credit of his energetic, if antiquated and pompous, eloquence, and the scheme of his thought, in itself clear and rigid, comes to be overlaid. In the *System* he is concerned to join faith and revelation into an alliance against "the Democritick fate, or the material necessity of all things without a God"; in other words, against the supposed assumptions of Hobbes: and to this end he endeavours to build secular into Christian theology with the mortar of Neo-Platonism. Cudworth's worst faults are to treat all quotations as of equal authority, and to twist the facts of intellectual history on both sides, enriching the historic faith with sundry Alexandrian conceptions of a "plastic nature" and the like, and torturing a latent monotheism out of the Greek

mythology. The learning shown in this effort is enormous, and not quite so uncritical as that of Rudbeck or Theophilus Gale. The *Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, not printed till 1731, answers to the second line of attack, against that "immoral theism" which accepts a God, but denies, with Hobbes, any absolute nature to morality. The work has its importance as a prophecy of the more serious reasoning of Clarke (see chap. vi.) Into his argument Cudworth presses an old image, not without aptness: "The evolution of the world . . . is a truer poem, and we men histrionical actors upon the stage, who notwithstanding insert something of our own into the poem too; but God Almighty is that skilful dramatist, who always connecteth that of ours which went before, with what of His follows after, into good coherent sense." His *Treatise Concerning Freewill*¹ is written in the same interest as his ethics, and was not published till this century.

Most of the unphilosophical Protestants, whose literature is large, went on making their souls away from the chief tides of thought and culture.

Protestants.

Their most winning and saintly voice is that of Robert Leighton,² first a Covenanter and then Archbishop of Glasgow, a man above party, whose long *Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter* was printed (1693) nine years after his death. By his sermons and expositions, some of them written in

¹ *Works*, ed. Birch, 4 vols., 1829. *System*, 3 vols., 1845.

² 1st ed. (Fall's), 1692-1708, and ed. West (1869-75). *Selections from Leighton*, ed. Blair, 1881.

Latin, Leighton shares with the Anglicans the note and the succession of the great preachers ; with the Platonists, their aerial touch of language, and, in place of the fierce engrossment with evangelical salvation, their high and secluded scorn of the world, which seemed a thing only half-real, but, so far as real, little worth having. There was no Jansenism in England ; but Leighton had been to Douay and learnt French, and something of the severity and sequestered dignity of the Jansenists is his ; and though his intellect is not really subtle, there is much in him beside his delicacy of cadence that suggests Cardinal Newman. Leighton, therefore, can be called an escaped Protestant, and has little kinship to the Puritan writers, of whom three may here be singled from the multitude. Each of them, after recording an intimate experience of doubts resolved in assurance, proceeds to the sequel of a talkative, organising, public life, spent in the effort to awaken his own experience in others. But of the three, Richard Baxter (1615-1691), though the best instructed, and the most eminent in affairs, and the most voluminous in print, is the least attractive ; George Fox, who died in 1691, is the least of a penman ; while John Bunyan (1628-1688) is the chronicler of genius, the great novelist and psychologist of the sect. Baxter wrote prodigiously both before and after the Restoration. Difficult, irreconcilable, and yet ever negotiating, his various phases, manifestoes, and sufferings are part of general English history, and of the struggle for indulgence. He wrote in almost every province of

divinity; on apologetics, doctrine, church order: he made books of devotion, sermons, tracts, rejoinders, without end.¹ He has properly been called a Protestant Schoolman, for he composed a great *Summa* of theology, which was more Calvinist than Arminian, but failed to please the Calvinists; he made, like Taylor, a casuistical guide to conduct (*Christian Directory*, 1673): and he is, like Taylor and the Anglicans, very well seen in fathers and councils, full of meticulous distinctions, and far better armed with church lore than any one else on his own side. Baxter, however, ran an orbit of his own as a theologian, and is not quite with the evangelicals of Bunyan's type. His immense, ill-edited *Reliquia Baxteriana* (1696) is best known in its abridgment by Edmund Calamy, third of that name. His *Saint's Everlasting Rest* (1650), still his most popular work, and often seen also in an abridgment, has fire and unction, but, like much that he wrote, is not really well written. Like most very combative divines, he is apt to become dreary reading, and he fails to give, as Fox and Bunyan give, the true impression of inwardness, being rather strident, impatient, and thin.

"It came to me;" "considerations arose within me;" "the light showed me;" it is thus that George Fox, while waiting surely to be chosen, phrases his illuminations: and the doctrine of the inner light, so much flouted by the rational writers, plays a capital

¹ 18 cols. in British Museum Catalogue. *A Call to the Unconverted*, "69th ed." in 1728. *Practical Works*, 4 vols., 1707; and ed. Orme (with life), 23 vols., 1830, reprinted 4 vols., 1868.

part in his posthumously published *Journal*. Yet there was something in common between Fox and those writers, though neither side perceived it: he is a genuine champion of fraternal humanity and tolerance. It is true that he is only passingly concerned with the Restoration, the Revolution, and other incidents in the history of Quakerism. His own nothingness before the Lord, he does not fail to ascribe also to Cromwell, or the King of Poland, or to those to whom he writes endless monitions on duelling, May-poles, or the removal of the hat. A sense of scale, or a humour like Bunyan's, might have raised his pedestrian English; yet it is raised already by its smouldering force and fire, and by the beatific note of the mystic who has *attained*. Thomas Ellwood's *Journal*, containing notices of Milton, is another sample of the writing that irritated Locke and Swift; and though the author has a more magnificent view of himself, with less right, than Fox, he has an eye for incident. Robert Barclay's *Apology for the Quakers* (Latin 1676, English 1678) gives in set propositional form, with dignity and unusual learning, the tenets of the Society. John Howe's *Living Temple* (1675 and later) is a fervid elaborate defence of the evangelical positions, equipped with remarkable reading in philosophy, but not of much real power or grace.

John Bunyan¹ (1628-1688) relates twice, and equally well, the great comedy of the evangelical life, in the

¹ Works partly collected 1692; ed. Offor, 3 vols., 1853; 4 vols., ed. Stebbing, 1859. Chief works (except *Badman*), selected, in 2 vols., Clar. Press, one ed. by Venables and the other by Miss Peacock. *P. Progress*, eds. and translations, 34 cols. in B. Museum Catalogue; see C. H. Firth's ed., 1898 (preface), for its popular sources.

medieval sense of comedy—*initia turbatinscula, fluctuati*. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* was

written in gaol and printed in 1666; and
Bunyan.

this ragged, fiery transcript of Bunyan's voyages, through abyss beyond abyss, to final assurance, has the same essential interest as the fable in which he embodies his experience, *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to come, delivered under the Similitude of a Dream*. The *First Part* of the *Progress* came out in 1678; the *Second* and fainter part in 1684. The drama related in these two books—their correspondences can be made out with some closeness—was enacted before¹ Bunyan was famous as a preacher, and before the two imprisonments, between 1660 and 1675, which imposed upon him the leisure to write well. No nature with an equal power of self-record has ever been so wholly isolated for the operation of Calvinistic belief, as a potent and transforming drug. The book that he knows best aggravates this operation by the way in which he knows it. His mortal hopes and fears are liable to be determined by a chance text, which he takes in the breast, like a bullet. And yet his irrational agonies have their foundation in human needs, and the forces of self-preservation spring up from the deeps in forms that are puerile. The vanity of the godliness that consists in mere behaviour is expressed by his humiliating discovery that the whole of his course, even when he had

¹ It has been shown that Bunyan served in the Parliamentary garrison at Newport Pagnell. See *Notes and Queries*, 8th series, vol. x., July 18, 1896.

amended his early and perhaps fictitious sins, has yet to run. *Accidia*, though he did not know the term, invades him with its fume as it did the slime-buried sinners in Dante; he calls it "a scurfy and seared frame of heart," which is a peril under all possible systems of morality. Out of this he comes, only to imagine soon that he has committed the irretrievable sin. His phrasing is accidental; but irretrievable some things actually are, and the (often imaginary) fear of having committed them is also a permanent mood of mankind. Then he enters rather suddenly—and this is also true to nature—into his peace, and goes forth as a missionary "to them in chains."

To describe this curriculum of the soul, either in allegory or without it, demands the gift or curse of a memory impassioned in its precision, like that which enables a few men to recall, after the hour is over, the little incidents of a rescue from shipwreck, or the inches lost and gained in battle. Bunyan has this faculty: it is a good deal economised by his apathy towards everything in the world that cannot be made vital to his religion. His quick piercing sense of humours and characters is awakened just so far as these meet him upon his pilgrimage. The effect is artistic, but there are not many signs of his drawing for pure pleasure, like an artist. At the same time, so many things come into the pilgrimage! A fight, a conversation by the wayside, any scene of variegated human meanness, he sets forth with a felicity that the desire to preach does not disturb, and in the coloured and apt vernacular which makes him famous in the

line of writers between Latimer and Cobbett. All these gifts are called out by the plan of the *Progress*, where Bunyan sets forth in a symbolic history his evangelical reply to the question, *What shall I do?*

The history is one of obstacles, which contrive in the allegory to become all equally solid. Moods and fears, genuine devils, and the family, which is the worst allurements of the world for holding back the pilgrim, have all to be embodied. The art and the odd captivating effect of the *Progress* are found in the certainty with which these things are figured—figured under various forms, as a giant, a monster in the path, or Mr By-Ends and Mr Heady, insinuating or bull-headed fellow-mortals. While inventing these symbols Bunyan let them run into moulds that were in no way strange to the popular fancy. A chaotic furniture of emblem-books, romances in doggerel or popular prose of giants and champions, and even the form of the allegorical trial, like that which Bunyan twice employs, lay ready to his use. The allegorical “houses,” which he is said by some to have found in Spenser, were more probably part of a popular inheritance which Spenser and his school helped to bequeath. But his use of them no more shows that he knew Spenser than his phrase, “thoughts like masterless hellhounds,” shows that he knew the famous tale of Boccaccio, which Dryden was afterwards to make popular in *Theodore and Honoria*.

Bunyan's *Relation* of his imprisonment and of his wife's encounters with the judges (whose posthumous condition she can but pity) is in his best style. *The*

Holy War (1682), though not without masterly passages, is perhaps in his worst. The Luciferiad of Milton has its weaknesses; but imagine a Luciferiad with all the poetry taken out, and with the Holy Ghost reduced to "My Lord Secretary"! The confusion of persons that is surmounted in the earlier allegory is here redoubled and succumbed to. "And just now, while Diabolus was speaking these words to Mansoul, Tisiphone shot at Captain Resistance." Bunyan is also less vivid, because he describes not his own feelings but his special legend about mankind, who have to be crowded together, good and bad, under the corporation of Mansoul. Nor can he properly end the allegorical story, for the real one is never ended. "And now," he has to conclude, "did Mansoul arrive to *some good degree* of peace and quiet." Still he shows his power in the trial of the Diabolonians, and in the humours of the high covenanting parties. In his novel, *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, which has to be read apart from its interludes of sermon, there is far more of his real writing than in *The Holy War*. If the doctrine, especially that of Mr Badman's ultimate damnation, be detached, there remain the annals of a swindling retail tradesman, who rises by his pranks and crimes to respected affluence, and dies unexposed and unrepentant. Bunyan believed so firmly in particular judgments dealt upon sinners in this life, that it may have cost him something to reserve sentence on Mr Badman, to whom the earth metes out no poetic or even Old Bailey justice. The wholesome cruelty of Bunyan's insight into peddling tricks re-

minds us of Defoe, but still more of Langland and his "regratours."

The Anglicans adapt themselves to the mental current more than the Protestants: they partially accept the new thought, they widely circulate the new style. They are both the *Anglican learning and preaching,* cloister and armoury of learning. Edward Pococke, the great orientalist; Archbishop Ussher (died 1656), whose *Chronologia Sacra*, long the canon in its own subject, came out in 1660; George Bull, one of the stiffer High Churchmen, whose leading works (like *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, 1685) were in Latin; Pearson, whose close-grained *Exposition of the Creed* (1659) is still in acceptance; and Cosin, and other divines and *sacants*, continued to keep alive the honour of Greek, patristic, and general erudition. And the old idea—Falkland's dream—of liberal Anglicanism as the nursing mother of culture is always present too, gracing or softening the harsher divinity by contrast. But that which stands firmest in the Anglican writings is the eloquence of the pulpit. As in France, the richer and more splendid manner of the sermon passes into one that, without being scholastic, is logical and ordered. Both the monarchs loved and favoured, in the intervals of recreation, muscular reasoning on matters of divinity. The English king preferred wit and pithiness, the French king had a wider and graver taste. Preaching in both lands increased its courtliness of tone under these auspices; but, in both, the most memorable sermons were those that kept the older magnificence.

Jeremy Taylor, save in allegiance, is not of the Restoration. One of the greatest preachers that we have had at any time is the mathematician *Barrow*, and theologian, Isaac Barrow¹ (1630-1677), in turn Professor of Greek and Mathematics at Cambridge, and then (1672) Master of Trinity. Barrow resigned the last of his chairs to his pupil Newton. His most laboured work is a *Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy*; he was a staunch royalist, capable of fanatical pleas for non-resistance; he wrote much exegesis. In logic and *ordonnance* he is like Bourdaloue. But he has more pith and power than Bourdaloue, though he has less restraint and also less ease. For Barrow, when his blood is up, puts a grave impetuosity into his long, trailing, but coherent paragraphs, that float the heavy Latin polysyllables along their smooth and steady flood. His diction is profuse, and at times (like Burke's) unharmonised, for he intersperses homely with pompous words, almost to the extent of conceitedness. In method and logic he is nearer Tillotson, in a certain greatness and melancholy nearer Taylor. His descant on the magnificence of death—"a winter, that as it withers the rose and lily, so it kills the nettle and thistle"—is of a strain as old as Raleigh's, and like Raleigh's. He rises to his fullest power when he is sounding the traditional, if fitful, note of the Anglican Church, "He hath rendered all men *salvabiles*," an article which his humane spirit regards chiefly in the light it casts on man's hope and

¹ *Works*, 4 vols., ed. Tillotson (language doctored), 1683-89; ed. Napier (text restored), 9 vols., Cambridge, 1859.

effort, but which is of course distinct from modern "universalism." Barrow, though professionally and sincerely a theologian, and a powerful one, is at bottom a moralist, an inspirer. He prefers to take some rich single idea, the Redemption, the fraternity of man, or some comprehensive virtue or failing—Contentment, Detraction—and work out its ramifications. This he does with a peculiar union of system and fervour: sometimes his accent is Carlylean: "If thou wilt be brave, be brave indeed, be not a double-hearted mongrel." He is the worst ignored of our great prose writers. His treatment is saved from being scholastic by the converseance with life and business which makes his distinctions real.

"He wrote like a man, but bit like a dog." Prejudice and anger at little enemies (as this saying, set down to Tillotson, may hint) deform some
South. of the wit of Robert South, the great Tory and Anglican preacher, and the favourite of Charles II. South¹ (1634-1716) chooses great subjects, but he has far less of the accent of greatness than Barrow. He is full of ingenious surprises, and gives something the same kind of shock as the fantastic writers, but without their poetry. All South's best matter is in his sermons, which are fairly free from the learned lumber of quotation. He has the heavy old scholastic arrangement, but his logical faculty is genuine. In defining, in bifurcating and trifurcating, in solidity, in exhaustiveness, in a certain strength of handling,

¹ *Sermons*, collected by South, 7 vols., 1679-1715; many eds.—*cap.*, 1850, 2 vols.; and 5 vols. (Oxford), 1842.

South is distinguished. His ornamental matter sometimes strays into the form of the character, as of the "flatterer" or the "zealot"; but it usually falls under his odd transitional form of "wit." "All such lamentations [of damned persons] cannot at all move a resolved deity; they are like a vanishing voice echoing back from a marble pillar, without making the least impression." The image is a little chilled,—Taylor or Browne would have heated it in its flight. Now and then the note of religious calculation, not alien to South in his own life, is heard. "Is it not as great a phrensy then [as for the sinner to sin on] for a man to take a purse at Tyburn while he is actually seeing another hanged for the same act?" South is less happy in these sallies than when he is solidly considering the make of ambition, or of anger (both failings of which he knew something), and in doing this before an audience of the elect that loved muscular reasoning. He is nearly the last preacher who commanded and used the evolutions of the long pulpit sentence. His chief enemy, or rather target, William Sherlock (*c.* 1641-1707), a poor dialectician, whose strange career has been told by Macaulay, was long famous for his *Practical Discourse Concerning Death*, and his other *Concerning Judgment*. His repute seems to have been guaranteed for nearly a century by pure platitude, or rather by the exercise of the common-sense spirit in a region where such a spirit is fatal. It became the weakness of our pulpit to drop into dead reasonable tones on such subjects as love, death, and nature. But these are subjects that find out the flaws in the

second-rate; and the debt of Addison to Sherlock's considerations on mortality only tells us the more about Addison.

John Tillotson¹ (1630-1694) represents the best side of this tempered rational attitude in religion. He lacks the rough savour of South, his *Tillotson*, manners and schooling are gentler, and he has something of the eclectic. He planned a *Summa* of theology; he was a friend of the Platonisers, and has left a character of Whichcote (*Sermon* 24) that is as finished as anything of the time out of Clarendon. He became Archbishop of Canterbury, and his sermons were the favourite pasture of the moderate High-Church classes for many decades after his death. The witnesses of the time leave us surprised over their celebrations of Tillotson's literary gift. We think more of his equable temper and his courage in travelling along the paths of tolerance, as an ally of Locke. A sermon of 1679 lays down that "Reason is the faculty whereby revelations are to be discerned." He doubtless carries further, and shows more neatly and decisively, than any preacher of his day, the gift of orderly and transparent form. Like so many, he unites an interest in practical ethics with the inclination to show that religion is rational and profitable. It has been remarked that Dryden's avowed debt to the style of Tillotson can hardly hold by reason of the dates. But his sermons were early in vogue with a very large public, which Dryden or Halifax would not reach, and he did much to spread,

¹ *Works*, with Birch's *Life*, 3 vols., 1752, also 10 vols., 1820.

outwards and downwards, the pattern of the New Model of prose.

Most of these currents of thought meet in Locke: we may almost measure the degree in which others speak for the time, by their distance from Locke. Unity is given to his loose and straggling system by his imperturbable, rational, naturalistic temper. The mixture of this temper with the English love of compromise and taking short steps has exposed Locke to criticism, for he goes different lengths in different subjects; but it is also a source of his power with his countrymen. He excited a freer play of international thought than all before him, drawing from Descartes and Grotius, retorting on Malebranche, and provoking the alternative psychology of Leibniz. He is the spring of the movement of philosophy which found its term in Hume, whose conclusions he would have disowned; and he had yet other altars raised to him by the Frenchmen of the "enlightenment."

John Locke was born at Wrington in Somerset on 29th August 1632, and died at Oates, High Laver, Essex, on 28th October 1704. He inherited popular sympathies but broke with puritanism. His educational theory was half formed by dislike of his own training at Westminster and Christ Church. A draft essay of 1667 shows how soon his views of toleration were formed, and a manuscript entry of 1671 contains the germ of his *Essay*. He became the intimate of Ashley, the first Lord Shaftesbury, after whose flight and death he was expelled (1684) from his posts at Oxford, and set free for travel and a

*Importance and
career of Locke:*

cosmopolitan life. In Holland he had "full leisure to prosecute his thoughts" with Limborch and other liberal friends. In the intervals of science, business, and medical practice, he worked up his great book, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which appeared at first (1688) in a French abridgment, and then in London in 1690.¹ It is signed, unlike the *Treatises on Government* of the same date, and unlike the first *Letter on Tolerance* of a year earlier. The next two *Letters*, which are rejoinders, came out in 1690 and 1692, and the last after his death. He had come back with the Revolution; he was Commissioner of Appeals. He was unmuzzled, and poured out his long-ripened thoughts. His classical little book, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*² (1693), and *The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures* (1695), followed. The latter drew him into a prolix war with Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester (*Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1696), a very practised theological disputant, and with many others. He did much public work on the Council of Trade and elsewhere, and lived greatly in his grave Socratic friendships with Limborch, and Molyneux, and Antony Collins. His letters are full of cordial affection and charm. Towards the end he has visions, and his words are

¹ 2nd ed., 1694, with changes; 4th ed., 1699, with notable additions; fully in French, tr. Coste, Amsterdam, 1700; in Latin, supervised by Locke, London, 1701; in German, Königsberg, 1755; Leibniz' criticism in *Nouveaux Essais*, written 1704, published 1765. Latest ed. of the *Essay*, by A. C. Fraser, 2 vols., Oxford, 1894.

² Ed. Quick Cambridge, 1875.

famous: "And now methinks I see openings to truth and direct paths leading to it; but this at the end of my day, and my sun is setting." He died among his friends the Mashams, with whom he had long stayed.

Locke's mental character is betrayed at many points. "He took a delight," says Coste in his *Mental character*; *Character*, "in making use of his reason in everything he did." "A rational free-minded man," he writes himself, "tied to nothing but truth, is so rare a thing that I almost worship such a friend." He will not entertain "any proposition with a greater assurance than the proofs it is built upon will warrant." The *Conduct of the Understanding*¹ (published 1706) is the best key to his temper. The inquirer "must not be in love with an opinion, or wish it to be true, until he knows it to be so, and then he will not need to wish it." If this is not the war-cry of the very highest creative spirits, there are few better; and here we listen to the saving note of the late seventeenth century, with all its sterilities and omissions. The "indifferency" thus commended he applies in his *Essay*, which is an inquiry into the make and natural history of the mind, considered in its bearings on general thought.²

The first book is a reasoned denial of "innate ideas"; the supposed laws of thought, and the conceptions of God and virtue, are not in the mind with-

¹ Ed. T. Fowler, Oxford, 2nd ed., 1882.

² *Life*, by H. R. Fox Bourne, 2 vols., 1876. *Locke*, by T. Fowler, in *Eng. Men of Letters*. *Works* first collected 1714, 3 vols.; 11th ed., 10 vols., 1812.

out experience; only through experience, when at all, are they found to be valid. In the second book, experience itself, at once the sphere and test of truth, is decomposed, and Locke draws out a revolutionary scheme of psychology from his distinction between "ideas of sensation" and "ideas of reflection." The third book, "Of Words," and the fourth book, "Of Knowledge," show the multifarious applications. The attitude of the whole inquiry is largely determined by that of positive science, and is thus adverse to Descartes, since whose time science, especially in England, had conquered many more fields of nature, and with whose abstracting and deductive method—as well as with the scholasticism that Descartes himself assailed—Locke is thus in collision. These contrasts are of moment, not only in the record of philosophy; they mirror differences in the national and literary bent. Both in France and England the positive and scientific temper gains ground on all hands towards the close of the century. But to the last the abstract and formulating instinct remains the stronger in France, the accumulating and compromising instinct in England. The full interplay of the two influences awaited the eighteenth century. Locke, meantime, founded an alteration of the weights and measures used for philosophical truth; and the notions of substance, matter, infinity, and God could not be approached in the same way, or with the same assumption of their intrinsic necessity, after he had spoken. The sixth chapter will indicate a little of the ferment which he raised in literature.

The same discipline is exercised on the matters of faith, and on the religious experience, so far as Locke could understand them. The famous chapter on *Enthusiasm*, added to a later edition (1699) of the *Essay*, the notes published by Lord King, the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, and the whole demeanour of Locke's mind, show how he fostered the temper, so marked in the following generation, of analysing the religious life from the point of view of the natural observer, not from that of the sensitive subject. Going in his mild corrosive way over experience, and coming to the phenomenon of "zeal," Locke, as a member himself of the Royal Society, seems to take out his licence to vivisect it. He was dealing with the experience that nourished the half-dispossessed puritan classes, and still nourishes their descendants. And "the true dark lantern of the spirit" he wishes to see fairly blown out, because he sets up the tribunal of reason, to which those whom he criticised have in no age of the world submitted. On the political side he works for comprehension, holding the old liberal creed that "vitals in religion are few," and he distrusts the confessions that bristle with contracts. Theism, and faith in Christ as the Messiah, serve for salvation. Against established orthodoxy Locke took the stand that reason, though it is not what makes revelation valid, decides what is revelation and what is not; but he is left within the Church by the results of this inquiry.

The *Thoughts Concerning Education* show how relentlessly Locke applied his improved instruments to the

matter and means of culture, depressing humanism only a little less than scholasticism, placing contact with affairs above the book-reading of *Style*, history, and treating words mainly as a source of illusion. He thus aspires to train an enlightened gentleman, not a recluse or student, and his programme of reading¹ corresponds. Perspicuity is the virtue of style, though without right reasoning it "serves but to expose the speaker." Locke is himself not always perspicuous, and is not usually a good writer, though his style can be easily undervalued. It is true that his clauses trail, that his diction is slippery and prolix, that his keyboard of language seems to be full of dead notes, and that his manner is embarrassed by the clash between the quest of truth unqualified and the desire to find a working and persuasive middle line. He writes best when the instinct to transact with his own logic is least upon him. He has often richness and ease, and a suave charm when he is speaking of his own experience and ideals. His *Character of Dr Pocock*² is one of the most humane and sagacious things of the kind. It belongs to the work that he had in hand that he is almost sterilised of poetry and of the higher audacities of prose: it is due to his modest desire of being the plain man, occupied only with his business, that he throws away the graces.

¹ See *Some Thoughts concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman*, which names La Bruyère, Cervantes (for "pleasantry and a constant decorum"), and Bayle.

² *Works*, ed. 1812, x. 299 (Letter of 23rd July 1703).

As in France, the rational age is inclined to slight that rational usage of the past which history and scholarship subserve. Bentley and his predecessors may be left to a later chapter. But the age of learning dies hard—or rather it never dies: it is cast in the shade, neglected by the literary class, and alien to contemporary thought; but it is gradually changed from the pedantic or anti-critical type to something sounder in all departments. A book like Theophilus Gale's *Court of the Gentiles* (1669), which derives all the tongues of Europe and much else from the Hebrew, gradually became impossible. Much, too, was done to store the materials for history; the noble age of antiquaries continued, and several immense accumulations can only be named. Sir William Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* was finished in 1673, and his *Warwickshire* had already set the pattern of county history; Thomas Rymer's *Fœdera*, or collection of State documents, began to appear in 1704; and in 1692 was ready the *Athene Oxonienses* of Anthony à Wood, who writes with an old-fashioned heraldic richness somewhat like Selden's. For the more recent history Whitelocke's *Memorials of English Affairs* (1682) gave valuable and partly original documents. If there is no work quite on the measure of Muratori's, England, on the whole account, stands high among the countries for zealous and strict research. Late (1702-1704) was printed the one great history written in English during the seventeenth century. The *History of the Rebellion* must have seemed an antique to its first readers; for Clarendon's air and

language, like his political conceptions, are those of 1649, and he falls to an earlier volume than this. It is a grand air, and no portrait-maker of Burnet's and Dryden's time has the supple, pertinent, sardonic analysis that follows so deeply the sinuosities of character. The *Continuation*, though it deals with the seven years before Clarendon's fall (1667), shows no concession to the new age. For other reasons the dialogue of Hobbes upon the wars, *Behemoth* (1679), is a survival also.

The career of Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), Bishop of Salisbury (1688), belongs to the history of the time, which he recorded, and which he played *Gilbert Burnet.* a part, by no means wholly baffled, in making. Burnet was by blood a Scottish Royalist of an independent stamp, and worked in his youth for Leighton in the futile effort to mediate between the Church parties of the North. His estrangement from Lauderdale brought him South; he became allied with the Cambridge divines, or rather with the Broad Churchmen like Tillotson, who were their practical voice. There was no cloistered or Platonic strain in the "brawny" spirit of Burnet, but his peculiar *via media* in Church politics was determined by these ties. At first, in the Popish excitement, he came forth as the official Protestant historian, furnished with much matter new to the England of his day, and wrote (1679-1714) his *History of the Reformation*, which is far less partisan than might be expected. The curious physiognomy of his opinions came out at the Revolution, when Burnet found his chance. His version of William's divine rights displeased the Whig

doctrinaires because they came down to something very like the divine right of the strongest, and his subtleties sat ill on a rather clumsy intellect. The *Exposition* (1699) of the Thirty-nine Articles was another of his failures in mediation. But Burnet did much to bring about the measure of toleration that was attained in his time. His latter life is a chapter of Church politics, and was much taken up with defending himself and his fellow-latitudinarians against the cross-fire of Anglicans and Protestants.

Burnet's *Life of Rochester* reveals the full armoury of a liberal churchman's mind, of no very distinguished temper, brought to play upon the accredited "atheist" of the day, who is not at all anxious to come to terms. The bishop is blind to the comedy of the concession made by the dying fine gentleman to the plebeian disciples of Jesus, that "the penmen of the Scriptures had heats and honesty, and so wrote." In the *Life of Sir Matthew Hale* Burnet understands his subject much better, and sympathises with the great judge's dignified steering between factions. *The History of My Own Time*¹ only began to come out in 1723; the whole was out by 1734. Burnet, like Clarendon, hardly dared to see his chief work in print. This famous chronicle has all the broken perspective, the lack of scale, the direct value of a book of Memoirs. It is the Memoirs of a theorist who is not a thinker, and of a practical politician who is just in his main ideals, steeped in the affairs that he relates, accurate in his

¹ Ed. Routh. 6 vols., Oxford, 1823 and 1833. (See list of Burnet's works in vol. vi.) A new critical ed., based on this, by O. Airy, Oxford, in progress (1899).

notation of the friends to whom he is close, but often blinded with perverse assurance in judging opponents and in sifting hearsay. The book has done much to fix the accepted Whig pictures of Charles II., James II., William of Orange, and the leading personages of the time. The "characters" are sometimes much less jejune and constrained in the earlier manuscript draft¹ than in the printed text. Burnet having little *finesse* of intellect, has little that is rare in his language; he only writes really well when the actual scene rises in his memory. Swift, annotating his copy with a Tory pencil, avers that "he never read so ill a style"; and Swift's *marginalia*, though malignant, may be read by those who cannot else perceive Burnet's slovenly manner. Neither has Burnet any total grasp of contemporary history, and hence he lacks structure in his composition. He has no views that go much beyond his own amendment on the Whig articles; but his worth is great, because these represented one of the best ideals of the day. He was a forcible reporter, and his sincerity is now little doubted.

Letters, memoirs, diaries, and miscellanies are numerous, but most of them serve social or political history more than literature. There is no *Secular personal literature.* Mme. de Sévigné, not even a Mme. de Motteville; but there are the charming letters, dignified, resigned, and pious, of Lady Rachel Russell. Those of Dorothy Osborne, Lady Temple,² on

¹ See specimens printed by Ranke, *History of England*, vol. vii. (English translation), and the whole of Ranke's analysis of Burnet.

² Ed. E. A. Parry, 1888.

the other hand, have a fresh, unconscious, and unsophisticated sweetness that most of the Frenchwomen lack, unless we think of the poor Louise de la Vallière, so totally different in her fate. Aubrey's *Miscellanies* (1696) are amusing ghost-stories, and his valuable *Minutes of Lives* also have to be used with some caution. There are solid and readable *Lives*, like those of the Norths, or Burnet's, or the religious biographies we have cited, which in their turn are much superior to the outpourings of the Quietists in French. In general the comparison need not go further: the instinct of style and conversation did not pass in England, as it did in France, into this stratum of writing. The merits of the *Diary* of Evelyn,¹ and of his *Life of Mrs Godolphin*, with their leisure and gravity,—of Ludlow's *Memoirs*,² with their hard fidelity of description and their pig-headed doctrinairism,—are of a different order. One work endures by the tenacity with which the writer avoids all affectation of form, and records atomically the sensations and considerations of Samuel Pepys, at first Clerk to the Navy Board, and afterwards Secretary to the Admiralty and President of the Royal Society. The *Diary* (1660-1669) shows the life of a capable, sincere, and esteemed official, on the inner side, with its unpresentable bits and seamed patches. Pepys wrote himself down in shorthand, as it would seem purely for relief, and for the supreme interest of the matter. A fantast might call it an

¹ First ed., 1818-19, by Bray, 2 vols.; ed. Wheatley (with *Life*), 1 vols., 1879. *Life of Mrs Godolphin*, ed. E. W. Harcourt, 1883.

² 3 vols., 1698-99. Ed. Firth, 2 vols., 1894.

entomological study, done in a spirit of science, of the creature he knew most nearly. But Pepys can describe; his account of the Fire gives at once the hazy vehement impression and confused perspective of the near bystander, and some of the precision seen in his official documents and speeches and his work *On the State of the Navy*. The *Diary*, of which a recension¹ is at last published all but free from reserves, has a life denied to much of the matter that we must call literature.

Literary criticism offers all the dissolving views of a time when the impulse of creation is perplexed and short-sighted. For criticism now halts
> *Literary criticism.* sullenly behind achievement, as it had done in the time of Shakespeare; oftener justifies the ill-accomplished fact, as in the defences of the heroic play; and, in Dryden, staggers under the competing assortment of literatures—classic, neo-classic, and Elizabethan—that pass before it. A scattered raking fire is turned on preceding forms and models, and this is part of the whole campaign against the received idols, whether constituents of thought or presumptions of belief. The “nominalism,” handed on from Hobbes to Locke (*Essay*, bk. iii. ch. x., *On the Abuse of Words*), insists on clear definition of the names, which alone things are; and it has its counterpart in the literary desire to see meanings plain and fixed, and a vocabulary with an academic stamp. Criticism, in fact, began; for the first time in our history it was comprehensive, it had ample matter ancient and

¹ Ed. Wheatley (with *Pepysiana*), 10 vols., 1893-99.

modern, and it fell in with the bent of the time. As we read the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), we seem to hear the creative spirit saying to itself aloud, *It is the seventh day; rest, and see if thy work be good.* And this judgment was entrusted to the mind of Dryden, mute and blank in some directions, but so acute, so generous, and so powerful.¹

Dryden sought about for some law of literary perfection. He was deficient in Hellenism. The lesson, *Dryden as a critic.* therefore, of antiquity he chiefly learnt in the form of the "Franco-Roman" ideals, with their limited scheme of perfection, their expression of law coercive, not of law free, organic, manifested in beauty. And these ideals he grasped, though not so fully as Boileau grasped them: there was a phase during which he was charmed by them; he realised them in his verse, in his prose he went beyond them. But he saw at last that they were not enough; he saw that reasoning, and finish, and a "central" diction are not enough. He found his escape from them in his other inspiration, to which he inclined his ear more and more;—in the free, genial inspiration of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton. It is true that he passed all these authors under the yoke of his own forms; but he valued them in themselves, he was touched with no far gust of the older flame, his speech on them is often splendid and adequate, and he ever remained half a romantic. Pope did not learn that lesson of him, and this is where Dryden is greater

¹ There is a good dissertation by Dr Paul Hamelius, *Die Kritik in der Englischen Litteratur des 17 und 18 Jahrhunderts.* Leipzig, 1897.

than Pope. Hence Dryden, at first appearing to be the prey of eclectic confusion, and inconsistent, works towards the light. From the first he is a princely critic. There are many oddities in his judgments, because his craving for a stable and rational rule is always crossing his deeper intuition of genius.

His first function was to mark his own escape from the fantasies by condemning them as it were officially; and in this process poets with the genius of Donne and Chapman had to be swept aside. The period of the heroic play marks his chief estrangement from the Elizabethans, his return to their blank verse marks his reconciliation. The *Essay* of 1668, meanwhile, falters between many models, with a preference for Jonson as the man who had conciliated the elder genius with regular form. The *Prefaces*¹ to the successive plays, and to the translations of Juvenal, Virgil, and Chaucer, form a series of articles in which almost every current question is handled: the unities, the *liaison* of scenes, the tragic hero, the poetical justice of comedy, the heroic play, the qualities and history of satire and epic and translation, the worth of particular writers. In range, in felicity, in poetical reading, and in a generous careless finality of judgment, Dryden surpassed all our critics, with the exception of Gray, until Coleridge; who was a poet of a different order, and who first established the true contact of our literary criticism with the thought of Europe. Dryden has likenesses to Lessing, if he be

¹ A selection of the critical works, edited by W. P. Ker, is promised by the Clarendon Press.

without Lessing's Greek, and philosophy, and mental loftiness; but in both men there rules the selective intellect, which, rather than imagination itself, leads them to discern what is great; and both have the same desire to bring their admirations under a clear law. Dryden's answers to his own critical questions are framed on various principles. The dialogue form in his first *Essay* genuinely reflects his own indecision. His most formal discussion, *On the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy* (1679), applies the Aristotelian division of plot, manners, sentiment, and characters, like a canon, syllogistically, almost as Addison did later in handling Milton. In the *Discourse on Satire* his own affinity to the Roman models brings him to happy conclusions in judging them. He bolsters up the heroic play by a mixed appeal to rule, precedent, and natural propriety. In praising Chaucer or Virgil his free judgment and his love of poetry break away. All that he says, whether right or wrong, is nobly written, and he is without inimitable manner.

Dennis and Rymer can be underestimated. They represent a sincere and extreme application of the Two little critics. rules, supposed to be dictated by antiquity, and foreshown in Jonson, of symmetry and conformity to canon. Thomas Rymer, the great compiling antiquarian, had some genuine feeling for Greek and Latin literature; his *Tragedies of the Last Age Considered* (1678) and his *Short View of Tragedy* (1692) are reviews, of Fletcher as well as Shakespeare, in the light of literal probability and daylight "reason." His heavy banter in distilling of the "warnings"

deducible from *Othello* really bring out (if nothing else) how far Shakespeare's crude old unaltered plots often really fall behind his poetry and his portraiture—things which Rymer did not follow. John Dennis (1657-1734) wrote most of his readable matter in his critique on Milton, named before, and in his didactic, though not fanatical, work (1701) on *The Advancement and Reformation of Poetry*. These writers appropriate a good deal, like Dryden and Addison, from the dilutions of Aristotle found in Rapin and Le Bossu. Boileau had little influence on Dryden, or on any one before Pope except Rochester and his group. As compared with Dryden, he judged the future place of his contemporaries far better, but did not understand the past of literature nearly so well. The whole *a priori* criticism in England is a stubborn feeble thing.

The triumph of rationalism and classicism was to unite in shaping our modern prose. This great change
Modern prose operated of course more widely than any
fixed. critical campaign that can be traced. It was a change of the utmost moment; its effect has been permanent, and it came somewhat suddenly: it is justly associated with the reign of Charles II., though its victory was not universal till that of Anne. It is also rightly credited to Dryden more than any other one man of letters, but the overlappings and transitions may be observed. Some of the elder writers survived this change, while some anticipated it. Clarendon, Evelyn, Sir Matthew Hale (*Primitive Origin of Mankind*, 1677), Anthony à Wood, are some of those who keep either the more Latinised diction,

or the long sentence of lumbering build, or both. Barrow and South intermix the same elements with a studied homeliness and curtness, and Aubrey's *Lives*,¹ mentioned already, have the old-fashioned vividness. The Puritan writers at large, with the divergent exceptions of Leighton and Baxter, remain, not so much conservative, as foreign to the change in style. Their diction and sentence are not learned or ecclesiastical, but biblical. The working prose of a great nation, in the stir and movement of a mundane century, can never be that of Bunyan. The steaming hives of men in parliaments and clubs and theatres must have their stint of Latin and of rhetoric. For "pure Saxon," despite its revival as a craze, can never express either all that prose, or all that poetry, must express. It may be justly said, on the other hand, that our current diction has been too little coloured by the language of the Bible, partly through the fault of Protestantism having parted company with culture, and partly because our prose was formed in an age that had so little to say which called on the higher solemnities of diction. For the most solemn utterance delivered in this period, *Samson Agonistes*, is a protest against the time itself.

The new prose is prophesied in Hobbes; but his English, into which passes the definite hard resonance of his Latin writing, was too pugnacious and domineering to serve as a model. *Its constituents.* Hobbes is regardless of the audience, but Dryden and Addison always regard it, whether they persuade,

¹ Now fully edited by Andrew Clark, 2 vols., Oxford, 1898.

expound, or converse. Prose was formed in a great measure by those who did *not* write, by society, by the new body of urban readers, and the change is palpable, if we step from Hobbes, who wears his style like bristling armour, to Swift, who wears his like a garment. And amongst the causes that determined the new pattern the scientific ideal is prominent. Sprat explains how the Royal Society "have exacted from all their members a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness; bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can"; and this in correction of all kinds of vicious aberration and voluble obscurity. The right manner is serious, consequent, reasonable, chary of audacities. And a eulogist, Glanvill, himself still touched with quaintness, praises Sprat's English as fulfilling the new idea of perfection: "It is natural and yet not careless, . . . the periods smooth, and of model proportion, . . . not rendered antiquated by long parentheses, nor gaudy by flaunting metaphors, . . . not loose and disjointed, ragged and uneven, but as polite and as fast as marble." This preference for logic, harmony, and politeness, is realised in two or three formal characteristics.

1. "Certainty of words and purity of phrase," or a standard diction. Dryden is here, once more, the great representative. He belonged to the little committee, recorded by Evelyn (*Letter to Pepys*, 12th Aug. 1689) as meeting in 1665 in order to fix the bounds of the language after the manner of the French Academy. "Three or four meetings were begun in

Gray's Inn by Mr Cowley, Dr Sprat, Mr Waller, the Duke of Buckingham, Mat. Clifford, Mr Dryden, and some other promoters of it." And in 1679 Dryden was still dreaming of the "Court, the College, and the Town" being leagued in the reform of words; and Swift, later yet, dallied with the notion, to which our race has been so recalcitrant, of a literary board of control. It was rather Dryden's own tact, and his adjustment to the taste of science and the Court, that fixed the standard of our unpoetical diction. The king, says Burnet, "had no literature, but a true and good sense; and had got a right notion of style." Charles had also a love for wit and comedy, wherein prose was much advanced, and a French distaste for a literary bore; and he too played his part, without fail, in forming the new prose. And many expressive French words, as M. Beljame¹ has shown, may well partly have been naturalised by Dryden, — *adroit*, *cajole*, *chagrin*, *masquerade*, *repartee*; or at least have won currency through his use.

2. Dryden, further, made perfect the harmony of the shortened sentence. Hobbes and Jonson had brevity, but less often harmony; the earlier preachers had harmony but not brevity; and in Chillingworth, who stands somewhere between, there is not much care for grace of sound. Dryden, in his flatteries and epistles, could return to the statelier convolutions, the difficult ceremonious dance of prose; but he prefers

¹ *Quæ e Gallicis verbis in Anglicam linguam Johannes Dryden introduxerit*, Paris, 1881. Cp. O. Emerson, *History of the English Language*, 1894, p. 167.

the happy harmonies that are the due of animated talk in good company, where all present understand one another, and it is not absurd to speak for a little while above the ordinary. Theocritus "is softer than Ovid; he touches the passions more delicately, and performs all this out of his own fund, without diving into the arts and sciences for a supply. Even his Doric dialect has an incomparable sweetness in its clownishness, like a fair shepherdess in her country russet, talking in a Yorkshire tone." These musical natural tones of the speaking voice, raised into enthusiasm but not into declamation, are something new in our prose, and refreshing.

Tillotson, Temple, and Halifax are usually credited with a part in these changes. Dryden's avowed debt to Tillotson has been already doubted; but Tillotson, a pale receptive writer, has, we have said, some independent claim to catching the style that was wanted, and has a still greater claim to having spread it amongst the vast serious class of Anglican readers. Sir William Temple¹ (1628-1699) it is not cavalier to treat almost wholly as an exemplar of style, for he had so little to say; but for the same reason he stands low even as a writer, and in form he is but a faint precursor of Addison. George Savile, Marquis of

¹ *Works*, 4 vols., 1814 (many eds.) If the above judgment should seem over-rigid, Macaulay's essay is not much more indulgent. Temple should always have the credit of his one perfect and pathetic sentence about "human life." See, for more friendly views of both Temple and Halifax, and for bibliography, the articles by T. Seecombe in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; also Miss H. C. Foxcroft's *Life, Letters, and Works* of Halifax, 2 vols., 1898.

Halifax (1633 - 1695), hardly published before the Revolution, save for his *Letter to a Dissenter* of 1687: in style he is fairly modern, and follows well in the wake of Dryden, and it is not unjust to name him under this rubric; for though his brilliant acuteness and breeding make his *Political and Moral Reflections* individual, his *Advice to a Daughter* chiefly shows a certain freshness of technique in dealing with trite matter, and his educational remarks are in the vein of Locke without Locke's generous breadth. *The Character of a Trimmer*, which came out in 1688, but was known some years earlier, is now ascribed without hesitation to Halifax, and sets forth his political *via media* with a strange mixture of mental detachment and practical adaptiveness. Its "piercing wit" is interspersed with sallies of noble if rather set eloquence. The stinging qualities of Halifax's phrase are best found in *A Character of King Charles II.*, where it is less marred with the obvious than elsewhere. Halifax had dipped deep in La Rochefoucauld and other French masters, and he played his part, between Butler and Swift, in gracing the foreign forms of Character and *pensée* with a subtler finish than they had yet received in our language.

But the more modern style had of course glimmered earlier. Sprat's *Life of Cowley* (1668) is more modern than Cowley's *Essays*, mildly Montaignesque rather than Addisonian, published the same year. But the change can only be appraised by reading over great spaces of prose in all its provinces; and to do this is to trace the same virtues

differently commingled, but, with many lapses, steadily advancing and triumphing along the diverse lines of development that end in Swift, in Addison, in Bentley, and in Defoe. In several writers prior to Defoe the prose of the people and the streets becomes a literary thing, and enlivens the "correct" diction. Its accents are heard in Barrow as well as in Bunyan; but it was chiefly a birth of secular journalism and transient satire. The squibs and light-spirited scurril productions of Tom Brown (1663-1704) would tempt this chronicle too far. More was done by the chief Tory pressman of the time, Roger L'Estrange (1616-1704), who was vastly read and popularly esteemed. L'Estrange was made, after the Restoration, licenser of publications, and for a long time had a monopoly of the right to issue news-sheets. Of these *The Intelligencer* and *The Observer* (1682-87) were the most important. He also poured forth broadsides, pamphlets, and translations. The most piquant and acceptable of the latter (and he dealt also with Seneca, Josephus, and Quevedo) was his *Fables of Æsop* (1692). Here and elsewhere he sought for authentic popular speech, and his slang gives colour and value to his writings, although the effect often resembles that of a foreigner overdosing his use of an acquired language with "idioms." All these elements pass into the new prose. But the pattern of the change, both mental and formal, is somewhat different in verse and drama.

CHAPTER V.

ENGLISH VERSE FROM 1660 TO 1700, AND ENGLISH DRAMA.

“*VETERIS VESTIGIA FLAMMÆ*”—MILTON—CHANGE IN TREATMENT—NATURE; ASTRONOMY—THE VERSE—CAREER OF DRYDEN—NATURE AND RANK OF DRYDEN—FATE AND FUNCTION OF DRYDEN—SAMUEL BUTLER: A CRITIC—‘*HUDIBRAS*’—MARVELL—OLDHAM—SATIRES OF DRYDEN—THE FRANCO-ROMAN MOB OF GENTLEMEN—ROCHESTER—LYRIC SCIENCE AND ART—HYMNS—TRANSLATIONS—THE DRAMA—CONDITIONS AND FATES OF TRAGEDY AND COMEDY—DAVENANT AND “RESTORATIONS”—PHASES: 1. HEROIC PLAYS—ROMANCE—2. BLANK VERSE DRAMA RENEWED—OTWAY—LEE AND SOUTHERNE—3. CLASSICISM: ROWE AND ADDISON—A NEW COMIC SCENE—FRANCE THE CREDITOR—PHASES: 1. HUMOURS AND INSTRUCTION—DRYDEN, SHADWELL, AND OTHERS—ETHEREGE AND WYCHERLEY—2. STYLE AND DETACHED WIT: CONGREVE—VANBRUGH AND FARQUHAR—THE PURITAN DEMURRER: DEBATES—THE COMBAT—3. COMEDY OF MORAL SENSIBILITY: STEELE.

OUR older poetry was one of the best things that shared in the Restoration, and the characteristic

Veteris vestigia flammæ. “Augustan” forms are but sudden terms

of a literary growth continuous through the civil changes. Often, as in drama and satire, these forms owe their power to others, apparently worked out, but reviving with a difference. The French influence was not so strong as the English.

Heroic rhyme, the weapon of the coming writers, was technically all but complete, and its associated rhetoric in existence, in 1660, long before the right interests were ripe for calling out its powers. The most splendid of the satires written before 1700 took less from Boileau than from Latin models which Boileau or Elizabethan poets had set the example of using. In such odes, elegies, and lyrics of this period as still have life, the "age of prose and reason" almost mocks at its own nickname; for these works drew from modes of verse current even before the war. Dryden's translations have nearly as much in common with the theory and practice of Fairfax as with ideals of strict finish. Some of the best matter of the elder drama, after paying due toll to the taste of 1660, was played little altered. The finer soul of tragedy in Otway was kindled from the Jacobeans. Milton was "restored" to his own work by the peace.

These connections, though coming to light at different dates, and with different degrees of force, often gave a resonance and depth to the new verse that there was nothing in its own age able to give it. It is to the honour of England as of France, compared with other lands, that, while each of them had a literature of first-rate force and inspiration not far behind it, neither was overpowered by that memory, or broke with it, but both by the aid of it built up a new literature of extraordinary mark. The fulness of the debt was dissembled by the attitude so often struck. The instinct to cling for dear life to the past was

turned to impertinence by the wish to make it presentable—to bring Chaucer, or Shakespeare or Fletcher, Virgil or Homer, under the forms which it was the business of the time to achieve. Part of this treatment came from dulness to the originals, part from a true critical attitude. It was Dryden's business, as the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* shows, to pit different literatures against one another, to compare conventional values, to find the "right" form. Hence much "restoration" of the old masters—especially of the dramatists—after the manner of the picture-dealer; for classicism would neither lose them nor let them be.

This arrested and permissive play of the past upon the present is well seen in the treatment offered to the chief living poet of Europe. Milton

Milton.

owed no more than his scorn to the new order, and he retorted upon it nothing less. He only saw in it a great refusal; his attack on the new rhymed couplet in the Preface to *Paradise Lost* is the one trace of his attending to its critical opinions. The *Diary* of Mr Pepys ends before *Samson Agonistes* was published; but Milton had been framed before the Protestant and the humanist spirit had suffered divorce. In him speaks the Puritan soul, kindled by the fray for liberty, and informed by a mighty and complete poetical learning. His later works, epic and tragedy, do not belong to the years (1658-1670) during which they were written. On the other hand, the first great poem, Thomson's *Seasons*, on whose

diction and movement the power of Milton can be seen working, falls (1726) too late for this volume. Earlier traces, in John Phillips and Lady Winchelsea, occur at the turn of the century. But, during the day of Dryden, Milton was not an influence—he was only a reputation, and his repute was that of one misunderstood.¹ His biographer has shown how the religious public and many of the cultured wits and Dryden accepted him. But despite Dryden's just, splendid, and cordial praise (Preface to *State of Innocence*,² 1674), Milton's position was not regularised and countersigned at once. He had to be reconciled with wrong first principles. The *a priori* vindication is begun by Dennis (*On the Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, 1704), whose view that Milton is a great poet, "because he justly and reasonably excites great passions," is like Addison's in the *Spectator*. It was a load lifted from the minds of the correct when it was found that Milton did not fail to satisfy what appeared to be the tests of Aristotle. He, therefore, these tributes and several editions notwithstanding, waited his time.

The decline of Marvell, the other *intransigent* poet, into satire—for him a lamentable industry—sensitively measures, not indeed the lapse of manners, and by no means fully the change of form, but that corrosion or transformation of the primary interests of poetry,

¹ Bayle, in his *Dictionary* (1697), *s.v.* "Milton," defines him as "fameux apologiste du supplice de Charles I.," and ends: "Il se mêloit de poésie, et plusieurs de ses poëmes, tant en Latin qu'en Anglois, ont vu le jour, soit pendant sa vie, soit après sa mort."

² His "operatic" dramatising or "tagging" of *Paradise Lost* is a chapter in the history of the heroic play. See p. 213, below.

which had been preparing through the war and the Commonwealth. Such a change, often disguised by the presence of survivors from an earlier day, expresses the spiritual change, so familiar from every kind of document, which the Restoration impelled. How far it went—"heavy as frost, and deep almost as life"—may be seen by the cheapened handling of the great imaginative subjects, which always bear recalling.

(1) The poetry of *love*, as it is found in the metaphysical lyric or the romantic play, is full of the sense of frustration, death, or *desiderium*, and in *change in treatment.* the Cavalier lyric is full of the sense of honour. Its faults are not those of Philistine shame or varnished low manners. But this love died down among the latter fantasies into a mere shell of Platonic phrasing, or into a gallant elegance. The power and sting of the earlier feeling are afterwards hardly found except in Rochester and in Otway: in the courtly writers the gallant elegance persists, a little thinned and attitudinising. "Love still has something of the sea," but begins also to have something of the low-tide mudbank. The "heroic love" of Dryden's plays is by no means without high elements, but is often marred by absurdity and unsoundness and a certain peering animalism. There are satyrs and there are saints, but humanity is the missing link. (2) The conception of *friendship* fares better; for though the passionate regard of Donne and the solemnity of the *Epitaphium Damonis* are lost, there is something of them in the lines written by Oldham on Morwent,

and a sweet penetrating Virgilian strain in those written on Oldham by Dryden. Literary friendships, however, lose their wings: yet, with Locke and Molyneux, or with Swift and Arbuthnot, they rest upon a community of high-spirited, cordial good sense, which the quest of reason or the desire to bound folly quickens sometimes into a heat. Tickell's lines on Addison and Pope's on his parents have the soul of piety in the forms of rhetoric. (3) The religious theme of *death*, so close to these others, is powerfully developed, but in prose only. In Barrow's eloquence there are sounds of Raleigh or Drummond. On the other hand, the precise cutting and self-command of Swift in his *Character of Mrs Esther Johnson* make it more impressive than *Lycidas* as a show of personal feeling. But death ceases to be strange or irrational, or to challenge mental exploration. And (4) we have only to think of Filicida, beside the *Annus Mirabilis* and the *Campaign*, to see that *country and battle* had lost their hold on the imagination. To say that (5) *nature* ceased to inspire, is a summary of several other sterilities.

The subtle and passionate suggestions, won by poets from the discredited astronomy, have left their familiar
Nature; print on language. The silenced *stars* and
Astronomy. spheres, with their influences, predominances, harmonies, and other figures and fancies of the Ptolemaic scheme, were slowly driven out of poetry by reason and science, and had to survive on credit, pensioned in dotage to offices of compliment or conceit. Verses written in 1661 show the cosmography in an

odd state of dissolution, and Dryden doubting between belief and grimace :—

“Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind
That, like the earth’s, it leaves our sense behind,
While you so smoothly roll and turn our sphere
That rapid motion does but rest appear.
For as in Nature’s swiftness, with the throng
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,
All seems at rest to the deluded eye,
Moved by the soul of the same harmony,
So, carried on by your unwearied care,
We rest in peace and yet in motion share.”

This was spoken six years before it was known how Raphael, while not denying the true astronomy, had not suffered Adam to deny the false. But the *earth* as well as the heavens began to speak less to the imagination,—a loss due less to scientific encroachments than to the gathering of writers in the capital, and their preoccupation with man and his quarrels or vanities. The poets literally lose the best of their senses, and cease to perceive with joy, or interpret with insight, the colour and outline of things, the cadence of sound or motion, and the life of creatures. Such a line as the blind man wrote,

“The field all iron cast a gleaming brown,”

contains more visual gift than all the succeeding verse of the seventeenth century. Rare, too, is anything conveying a poetical and chivalrous sense of the beauty of women. The whole interest in the outwardly beautiful declines ; it is the great omission of the age. And this decline expresses the general

invasion of poetry by ideas, arguments, and abstractions, which minister both to the rational spirit and to a false notion of literary dignity. The concrete interest confines itself chiefly to society and persons. In Dryden's improvised lines on Tonson ("two left legs, and Jndas-coloured hair"), or in Gay's minute notes on London, or in Swift's list of toilet articles, the beautiful is replaced, not by the abstract, but, on the other side, by the particulars of ugliness. The interest in the *expressive* comes to rule, and when manners are base the expressive is not always pretty.

And these things, love and friendship, country and battle, death, the stars, beauty of the visible, are the stuff of poetry. Nor is the change less if one other topic be added, the dealings between God and man. Argument and analysis, middle axioms, balancing and valuing of probabilities, all replace a poetical by a merely logical movement, as in the *Religio Laici* or the *Essay on Man*. The serene unity and august fixed conclusions of *Paradise Regained* vanish. There are special survivals of the lost spirit in Bunyan or More or Leighton, where the soul is poetical, though the form is not that of verse. But the whole loss and gain of the Augustan age might almost be summed up by saying that the saving process of human thought was forced for generations to beggar the sense of beauty.

But even an age of secondary verse wants some æsthetic satisfaction: it has an ideal of style; it also has an ideal of technique, which must be studied in its formal evolution apart, but which is no more separable (unless our abstraction is to be vicious) from the ideal

of style, than either can be studied apart from the poetical conceptions that they invest. Prosody disturbs or coerces thought and feeling through expression. The heroic distich imposes its own accent on the kinds of verse—praise, tragedy, elegy, satire, and translation—which it captures. But the articulation of its rhythm and structure was complete sooner than its conquests.

The Elizabethans and Jacobeans had faltered between three varieties of the heroic couplet, or pair of rhymed decasyllabic lines in ascending
The verse. (“iambic”) rhythm. These are distinguishable as the *free* form, the *rugged* and chaotic form, and the *pointed* form. The *free* form is that used in *Hero and Leander*, or in Chamberlayne’s *Pharonnida* (1659), and revived by Leigh Hunt and Keats, and is a romantic metre. It is not overloaded with stresses; but it is not sharply balanced, and it admits more or less free use of *enjambement* or “overflow,” wave softly tumbling over and usurping upon wave in multitudinous lapse. The *rugged* form is used in parts of Spenser, in Donne’s satires, in Cleveland, and Cartwright, and, with some mitigation, by Marvell later. It is a relic of the transitional age of prosody, and at one extreme tends to be accentual altogether. “There was no distinction of parts, no regular stops, nothing for the ear to rest upon.” It is harsh and slothful, full to excess of clumsy overflow, with knots and gnarls of superfluous stress, and other vices which answer to an uncertain diction and unfinished syntax. It persisted in the later fantasies long after Waller and Denham, revolted by its impossibility, had determined “our

numbers" in favour of the *pointed* couplet. Their campaign was probably little aimed against the free couplet, which was smooth enough, and which died out for more than a century, perhaps because the romantic feeling to which it was accustomed died out also. The debt of Waller's line to native tradition may not have been fully estimated by Mr Gosse¹; but there is no doubt that he has shown that it was framed with the least possible reference to the French Alexandrine, however this measure may by example have extended its later use. In Spenser and Drayton (especially the *Heroical Epistles*, 1597), wherever the higher mood turns to invective or remonstrance, the verse instinctively falls into isolated distich, into lines and parts of a line pitted against one another, with fairly regular stresses and break. And these, together with a smoothness and lightening of stresses which is not absent either in those earlier models, are just the characters sought for by Waller, Denham, and especially George Sandys. This is not the place either to quote passages in proof; or to discuss the claims of priority between those who first made this occasional manner of Elizabethan verse habitual; or to argue the point whether Waller's earliest verses (nominally dated 1623), which seem to show the new rhythm almost consummate, were or were not revised by him into the shape we know. In any case, at the Restoration there remained Waller himself, with a certain train of followers, who had used the reformed distich for celebration or flattery; there were the few rough recalcitrants, and there

¹ *From Shakespeare to Pope*, Cambridge, 1885, chap. i.

were the Ogilbys and Davenants, whose verse was more or less indeterminate. But it is nearly true that, as far as the future of technique was concerned, "in 1660 the journey was complete, the change was made" (Gosse). The stages may be broadly seen by turning over in series the verses celebrating the 1645 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, the various greetings to the Restoration, those (1680-1682) that were poured forth on the Popish Plot and in reply to *Absalom*, the posy of poems on the death of Waller in 1688, and those written on the death of Dryden twelve years later. "The excellence and dignity of rhyme," says Dryden in a well-known passage, "were never fully known till Mr Waller taught it; he first made writing easily an art, first showed us to conclude the sense, most commonly in distichs." This was the universal view, and is set out by Atterbury in his preface (1690)¹ to Waller's *Poems*; though, considering Dryden's odes and hymns, which rest upon earlier measures out of Waller's range, it is hard to suppose him so deaf to the older rhyming as might be feared. Dryden's own technical extensions of the couplet are his hemistich, where he is unfortunate in the following of Virgil, and the triplet and the Alexandrine, used either jointly or apart. Both of these, though Pope was to retrench them, suit Dryden's freedom and magnificence. But such usages matter less than the general power, pace, and sonority which he and he

¹ See the whole quotation in Craik's *English Prose Selections*, vol. iii. p. 460.

alone lent to the measure for whatever end he used it. As the verse, clanging on its brazen pinions, is lifted into the middle if not the upper air—

“Thus are they happy, when by length of time
The scurf is worn away of each committed crime :
No speck is left of their habitual strains,
But the pure ether of the soul remains” (*Æn.*, bk. vi.)—

the verse, with its panoply of contrasted clause and attribute, its power to heat and justify the long words—*habitual, ignominy, predestinating*—and its power to make its point without sinking into mere metrical reasoning: who, with this in his ears, can but feel that though it chanced to glorify the aggressive or argumentative purpose, it was itself born to greater things, for a great speculative poem, or a great “Gothick” parody like Tassoni’s? If only some one had had the mind! The supremacy of the couplet over contemporary measures was a natural one. It is more continuous than the quatrain, which has an inscriptional kind of dignity. The Pindaric, only suited to a few subjects, lent itself terribly to sham harmonies. The Hudibrastie couplet kept its own plot of ground. Blank verse only re-invaded as an armed ghost, with the echo of Milton in description, and in tragedy with the echo of Fletcher. The couplet, however, had its one relapse between Waller and Pope, for we can credit little except a certain lessening of its friction and also of its force to the school of Roscommon. It was Dryden who saved the virility of the metre by never giving in to the

idolatry of the academic. Whenever afterwards, as by Churchill or by Gray (see his *Lines* from Statius), the need is felt for a specially nervous and gallant strain, the temptation is to leap over Pope back to Dryden. It has been shown how his steady martial beat enters to strengthen Keats's *Lamia*.

John Dryden,¹ the master, voice, and glory of English secondary verse, was born at Aldwinch in Northamptonshire on the 9th August 1631, and died in London on the 1st May 1700.

*Career of
Dryden.*

After various exercises, some of which were done at Trinity College, Cambridge, and even at Westminster School, he wrote his *Heroic Stanzas* on Cromwell's death. These are in quatrain, like the *Annus Mirabilis*, the last and chief poem of his first period (1667). Between had come the *Astræa Reduc* and other oblations to Charles and Clarendon, in couplet, and signifying Dryden's "change with the nation." In this stage he is forging his speech, rather painfully, out of the rusty stock of the fantastics. The *Annus Mirabilis* is choked with a hurry of harshly discontinuous figures that compare the advance of the fire with Cromwell, a sea, an army, or a monster. The style, though gorgeous in patches, is not good, and Dryden cannot yet administer his inheritance. At the same time he is making, in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*

¹ *Works*, 18 vols., ed. Sir Walter Scott (with *Life*), 1808; re-edited by G. Saintsbury, 1882-93. Macaulay, and W. D. Christie (*Works*, Globe ed.; and *Select Poems*, 5th ed., revised by C. H. Firth, Oxford, 1893) give the severest view; G. Saintsbury, *Dryden* (*Men of Letters Series*), 1888, gives a more genial one. See L. Stephen, *s.v.*, in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; and J. C. Collins in *Essays and Studies*, 1895.

(1668), prose without fault. His second stage overlaps the first; from 1665 to 1681 he steadily made tragedies,¹ prologues, and epilogues; and these, with his comedies, tragi-comedies, inserted lyrics, dedications, critical prefaces, essays, and occasional verse, make up the work of the prime of his life, though not of the prime of his art and force. He turned to play-writing not through his bent but necessity: it drew him close to the king, court, and grandees, who were his paymasters. In this period his style is cleared, —his audience would not bear conceits. His tragic writing (which, like his comedy, will be detailed under the drama separately) not only perfected his verse, but gave him the needful reserve of serious or exalted tones in his poetical oratory. The famous lines in *Aurungzeb* on the emptiness of life (Act iv., scene i.) foretell, with their ring of sincerity, the heartfelt confession of the *Hind and Panther* (i. 68-76), and his plays are full of political arguing. And if his tragedy has only a kind of relative worth, and if its vast alloy of folly was not unjustly exposed in *The Rehearsal* (1671), at any rate he worked that folly off, and this it may be well for a satirist to have done before he comes to his true calling. In 1670 he was formally made Laureate. There is no space to tell his prolonged literary and personal dealings with Sir Robert Howard (whose sister he married), with Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, with Rochester, with Settle, and with Shadwell. Everything matured his powers,

¹ For Dryden's drama, see *post*, pp. 213, 254; for satire, p. 228; for his lyric, p. 237. It seems the lesser evil to treat him piecemeal here.

whether of argument, of praise, or of offence, in verse and prose.

These powers, in his third period, from 1681 to the Revolution, found their predestined theatre. There now remains no fumbling, no absurdity, no doubt of what form to choose, no lapse in the kind of execution intended. The consummation of Dryden's metre, style, and victorious militant intellect is to be found in his satires—namely, *Absalom and Achitophel* (First Part, 1681; Second Part with Nahum Tate, 1682); *The Medal*, the sequel of the First Part; and *MacFlecknoe* (also 1682), a *riposte* to Shadwell's indecent *Medal of John Bayes*. The art of logical verse, already so evident, is fully disengaged in the two theological counter-pleas, *Religio Laici* (1682) and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687). Between these came Dryden's passage to the Roman Church. But he was forced into other presswork, and began translating: the first *Miscellanies* are dated 1684. The Revolution dispossessed him, and Shadwell was Laureate. To avoid breaking the story, it is best to show the master-works of this period in their setting, in the history of their several kinds.

A closing phase of twelve gallant years succeeded, when Dryden not only wrote five more plays, but invented a new literary species, which he brought to terms with his now perfected gifts. The *Virgil* was all published in 1697; the *Persius* and *Juvenal*, with pieces of Ovid, Homer, and Theocritus, had come out in sundry *Miscellanies* (1684-1694); the *Fables*, his transcriptions from Chaucer and Boccaccio, appeared in 1700,

the year of his death. He had also at various times done elegies—some, like *Eleonora* and *Threnodia Augustalis*, perfunctory or official; some, like those *To the Memory of Mr Oldham* (1683) and *To the Memory of Mrs Anne Killigrew* (1686), his highest poetical writing; while the lines of 1693 *To Mr Congreve* are a kind of elegy on himself, in a noble mood of softened self-pity. His other verse is either epistolary (*To John Dryden*) or lyrical. The songs are mostly in the plays: the over-valued *Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music*, is a late work (1697). The hymns (see p. 238) that he probably contributed to the Catholic manuals were never acknowledged, and can only be dated as after his conversion. Dryden also did prose translations, of which the most interesting is that of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*; and there are others like Maimbourg's *History of the League*. His critical and panegyrical prose has already been described.

Dryden was modest, backward in conversation, and kindly. His natural manly independence and critical judgment are always struggling with his position as representative man, and with his susceptible, assimilative mind. His worst faults, besides the dull licence which he affected at times, and into which he relapsed after repenting, are his flatteries, which ran too easily from his pen and go beyond the fashion of the day, and his fatal proclivity to play the advocate, sometimes for opposite sides and almost at the same time. His conversion served his advantage for the moment. But it also landed him in what the sincere accents of *The Hind*

and Panther show to be a perfectly natural bourne of his thought. His acute powers of pleading worked upon the jury, already prepossessed, of his heart and conscience. The worst traits alleged against him lessen after his great trial and fall in 1688. But those faults deprive him of the appeal and the power that he seems to promise. In some ways we must say of him what he quotes "my last Lord of Rochester" as saying, "though somewhat profanely," of Cowley: *Not being of God, he could not stand*. His insight into life is as far behind Butler's as his horizons are shorter than Locke's. The intellectual future was shut to him, for he only utters with superior skill and sincerity the ideas of the average party man on the State or the Church. His work was to justify the higher rhetorical element in our poetry, and to find its forms; and this he did. It is he that brings the rational intelligence (*Verstand*) to bear on the current poetical sentiments and fashions. He tries to draw out of the greatest preceding English poets whatever will suit his reforming categories. He makes the most serious formal departure in prose that any English writer has ever made; and in verse he starts a tradition that, though it could not be final, did not become inexpressive for over a hundred years.

It would be an error to think, despite his uses of Molière and his occasional trust in third-rate French critics, that Dryden was greatly touched by the *siècle*. Except in literary criticism, he had not its characteristic justness of measured thought. His verse moves in the very kind

*Fate and
function of
Dryden.*

of rhetoric from which the *siècle* drifted away. Though he purged and modernised prose, and writes without cumber or friction, and so far ranks with Madame de Sévigné and other contemporaries; though he is, like them, aware of a coercive audience and a standard of niceness,—yet he is fuller of fervent heat and largeness than any of those French writers who are at all analogous to him. Besides, his work was independent, and he was able to build his most remarkable forms on suggestions from English models. He misses, at the same time, the finer effects of a writer like La Fontaine and of “ces bonshommes,” the chance turn of whose phrasing led Flaubert to despair of himself. But he is formed under the same class of influences as all the great “Augustans”; for he always writes with a critical and logical intention, and he is the only great master of our letters, in both the kinds of prose and verse, of whom, without his lacking (as Pope lacks them) elemental largeness and flame, this can truly be said.

Samuel Butler (1612-1680), the most resourceful English satirist in unheroic rhyme, is limited by his lack *Samuel Butler: of any sense or desire of beauty, and em-*
a critic. bodies (more than Dryden or the other aggressive writers, who cared at least for resonance) that annulment of the æsthetic feeling which belongs to a time when the old inspirations are finishing, and no serious mind can be satisfied with the new. He is not a party mocker, but a critical cynic, loving the Restoration none the more that it was his business to confound in one travesty the departing types of

Puritan, pedant, and quack. The son of a farmer, he was born near and schooled at Worcester, and probably had no academic teaching; certainly, like Saint-Simon (with whom affinities might be traced), he was "pas un sujet académique." During a shifty life, which included a stay as secretary to Sir Samuel Luke, the partial original of his *Hudibras*, he wrote and hoarded his great poem. The First Part came out in 1663, after a pirated issue. The popularity of *Hudibras*¹ with the whole Royalist world, and the neglect of its composer, were a proverb long before the fat age of authors that came fifty years later. The Second Part came out in 1664, the Third in 1678. The *Genuine Remains*, published by Thyer of Manchester in 1759, can seldom be dated. If the spirit of the *Characters* and *Thoughts* were betrayed by the living man, he might well seem hard to pension; but we know little of this patient and secretive observer.

It is chiefly the *Genuine Remains* that unmask for us the melancholy simplicity which is the pith and honour of Butler, as dexterity and sharpness are his graces. They show the ultimate mood of a coarse, honest, and irregularly learned mind, equally malcontent with the old enthusiasms and the new substitutes. The "rabble" who cannot rule, the doctrinaires who scheme on paper, and the kings who return to riot, are not better one than the

¹ Best edition still that of Zachary Grey, 2 vols., 1744; see also ed. Milne, 2 vols. For all the *Poetical Works*, see new Aldine ed. (R. B. Johnson), 2 vols., 1893.

other. In *The Elephant in the Moon* he derides the Royal Society, which is the darling offspring of peace and reason, as cordially as he shows up hermetical and school philosophy in *Hudibras*. Papistry, atheism, and the various manifestations of "zeal," are equally bad; the Anglican establishment is perhaps least distasteful to Butler; but he has a vein of scepticism. Modish sentiment fares very ill, and the dying fall of the Dryden-Howard amatory dialogue is perfectly mimicked in *A Caterwauling in the Modern Heroic Way*. In the *Characters* (and *Thoughts*), some of which are not beyond the ordinary type, while some are still unprinted, Butler ever returns to the tone of a man undeceived by life. "When the world was younger, it might perhaps love and hate and do generous things," but now all the poetical "images of those virtues signify no more than the statues upon dead men's tombs." "All the business of the world is but diversion, and all the happiness that mankind is capable of, anything that will keep it from reflecting upon the misery, vanity, and nonsense of it."

Thinking so, Butler vented himself by an imitation or parody of *Don Quixote*, the most heroic of mock-romances. As Johnson so clearly shows
Hudibras, in his *Life* of Butler, the following of Cervantes is wholly external, and the frustrate noble dreamer becomes a monster and hybrid, "compounded of swaggerer and pedant, knight and justice." To Presbyterian colonels is ascribed a love of star-gazing and magic, in which they were scarcely graduates.

The nullity of the Knight and the Squire is hidden by the spurt and crackle of epigram and by the play of abstruse reference, which flings itself at everything, from "first matter," an effete property of the schools, to the sphere music, an effete property of verse. But the great travesty is just as sterile from its lack of root in humanity and poetry, and from the distance of its wit from humour, as from its failure, with its threadless episodes and lack of ending, to satisfy—what are perfectly adequate to judging it—Johnson's rule and line of plain sense. Yet the intellect and spirit of it are prodigious; and the more its allusions are scrutinised and the recesses of its learned acrimonious mockery explored by the student, the more clearly we see, dissolving in the strange glass that Butler offers us, the credulities and watchwords of the two distinct moments in our history—that of the war, with its faith, fanaticism, and chaos, and that of the disenchantment and the revulsion. Butler embodies the mood, that besets nations at such a moment, of gravely deriding the grotesque surface of their own doings and beliefs. His verse is its natural expression: we need not seek far for instances both before and after Butler of his special jiggling use of the octosyllable. Cleveland's *Epitaph on Strafford*; many of the *State Poems*; Prior and Swift and Mandeville in a later generation, show the vitality of the measure at various times. All are distanced by Butler himself, whose rhymes confront us with Prior's image of the rope-dancing harlequin, full of sham tumbles, impossible jumps, and surprising re-

coveries; only, the sword is of steel that can cut and slash, not of lath. In much of his imagery Butler is the last fantastic, trafficking in those conceits which he ridicules by the act of use. The poetic vein seldom peers through, as it does once in the figure of the moon doffing her

“Mysterious veil, of brightness made,
That’s both her lustre and her shade.”

The satires of Andrew Marvell¹ measure somewhat drearily the supplanting of the poetical mood by the aggressive, without any answering mastery

Marvell. of the forms suitable for the change.

Marvell submitted to the temptation of lashing the time, but did not learn to use its literary organ. Noble anger led him, like Milton, but without Milton’s return into poetry, to desert his proper work. Had so impregnable a soul been an executant like Dryden, he might have been a kind of English Juvenal. As it is, his strain of uncouth indignation is like that of Hall and Marston, though sincerer; and his rugged couplet is out of date. No more *Bermudas*, no more *Dialogues between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure*—nay, no more *First Anniversaries*—the poems on Cromwell show the transition—but *Clarendon’s House-Warming* and *Last Instructions to a Painter*. The latter is Marvell’s longest and most formidable attack on the Court, and is the chief of a swarm of pieces with kindred titles (Denham’s

¹ *Works*, ed. Grosart, 1873-75, 4 vols. *Poems*, ed. Aitken, 1892, 2 vols. (satires in vol. ii.)

Directions, 1667; Marvell's own *Further Instructions*, 1671; and *Advice*, 1674) which are jeering retorts to Waller's *Instructions to a* (supposed) *Painter* to celebrate the Dutch victories of the Duke of York (1665). The fullest, in point of matter, of all the satiric documents of the time, Marvell's piece is one long eruption of steam and shapeless slag. It could only be printed, with some others, in 1689, eleven years after the writer's death. But it must have been passed round, and the concluding vision of Charles II. would have some power and weight if we did not think of Rowley in the flesh. The earlier pieces, like *Tom May's Death* (1650) and *The Character of Holland* (1653), are better-humoured and better done. The coarseness with which Marvell has been charged lies in the things that he describes, and is wholly without complaisance.

Not ill-founded is the divining praise of Dryden's tender inscription *To the Memory of Mr Oldham*.

Oldham. John Oldham,¹ the son of a Nonconformist

minister in Gloucestershire, was born in 1653, and died of smallpox at thirty. His renown has failed unduly of fulfilment because he achieved no one concerted piece, and because his best-known work, *Satires upon the Jesuits* (1681), was conceived in prejudice, and brought forth in spleen, adding the faults of youth and ignorance to the formal defects of Marvell. His "rugged line," when he writes in couplets, flounders along hastily, like a man in rude old armour. But about some of his odes (though

¹ Poems first collected, 1683. Ed. Bell, 1854.

here, too, is much uncertainty of performance) there lightens the penetrating and flashing power of the mystics, quite absent in his latter master, Dryden. His obituary ode of 1675, *To the Memory of Mr Charles Moreau*, is singular for the lateness of its high rhetoric: few poets after 1660 would have written of a friend as—

“So chaste, the dead are only more,
Who lie divorced from objects, and from power,”

a couplet which with its doubtful rhyme and syntax, its anachronistic praise of chastity, and its large splendid thought and phrasing, is altogether in the extinct manner. The Alexandrines of the last paragraph of the *Ode on the Works of Ben Jonson* have also a superb movement. In a *Satire addressed to a Friend* Oldham shows his real wish, not for the fume of conflict, but for the unknown and lettered life. His *Imitations* and versions of French and Roman eritics ally him with the later wits, whose writings the satire of Dryden so little resembles that it claims prior treatment.

The portraits in *Absalom* are so far of Dryden's invention, as a kind, as to make us forget all the matter of the same sort dispersed through
Satires of Dryden. Spenser, Jonson, or Donne. Nor are they less in advance of the Theophrastian *Character* in prose, so inorganic, so weariful in the long-run or sooner, so interchangeable, without loss, in the order of its monotonous items. Something of its lack of structure remains in Dryden's lines on Zimri; his

Shimei is better, because, not having this fault, it falls into a developed period of one long breath. From the full-lengths of Shaftesbury in two of the poems, very consistent, yet historically very perverted, to the roaring caricatures of Shadwell in the other two; from these to the gallery of favoured ones, from Barzillai, Duke of Ormond, to Adriel, Earl of Mulgrave,—all owe some of their power to that which is also the source of their apathy to the truth—namely, the fatal good temper of the advocate, who can never rise to be a judge. Beside a page of Clarendon or Saint-Simon they seem violent, for Dryden, as he showed in his dramas, could not at all reproduce life or character in its difficult play of contradictions.

The skill of *Absalom* lies less in its clever adaptation to the Bible original than in the show of unity given to a story by necessity unfinished; the story of the great Whig Achitophel expecting trial, and of the king and prince whom any turn in the game might reconcile. The speeches, framed with such a possibility in view, are better drama than any tirades in Dryden's plays, though drama of the elocutionary sort. Not one of the crowd of imitative retorts has any value (*Absalom Senior, &c.*) In *The Medal*, Shaftesbury, after his acquittal by the bourgeois jury, is more seriously pelted; there is more discipline of attack, the verse has a graver hum, and the piece melts into a statement of Dryden's politics. The antipathy of attitudes between the *Religio Laici* and *The Hind and the Panther* (which is also largely a satire) is not quite that of opposite briefs in the same case; for Dryden

rested sincerely in the old faith. Both pieces have the same rhetorical movement as the solidier parts of the satires, and the actual workmanship, with deference to the shades of Sir John Davies and Pope, is like nothing before or since, in the ease with which it does the hardest things. The conduct of the logic is deserving of this praise, but the machinery of the longer poem, with its "Bloody Bear" and "Baptist Boar," is only a burden, because the issues pronounced upon are temporary, while the speakers in the great beast-fables of the world (like *Reynard*) only utter general traits or truths. In *MacFlecknoe*, where the living Shadwell is bound in a kind of boisterous *noyade* to his dead "father" Flecknoe, Dryden fore-shows not only the *Dunciad* (to which this stentorian little poem is surely superior), but the whole programme of the Scriblerus Society for the extinction of pedants and bad writers. Some of Dryden's best prologues (as that to *The Man of Mode*) are full of this passion for belabouring folly, but only in *MacFlecknoe* is the intent to do so fell and settled. There is less justice than ever, for even Flecknoe wrote one happy lyric (*Chloris*); and Dryden, whose turn for comedy was limited (as he confessed), thought Shadwell a worse poet than he really was.

In 1679 Dryden was beaten by Rochester's gang on the supposition that he had a hand in the *Essay on Satire*, a hard, rough work, with some outstanding lines, and directed in part against the Court. This would have been double-dealing in the Laureate; but his share is not proved. The main author was John

Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, and latterly Duke of Buckinghamshire, whose worship of judgment and measure, as set forth in his *Essay on Poetry*, are in his lampoon *On Satire* much belied. The work stands apart from Dryden's, and is on the dividing-line between the harsh, old invectives and that more varnished type of satire which flourished in the last twenty-five years of the century, and which had little endurance enough, save as the schooling-ground for Pope.

During those years, under the sway of a compound precedent, in which the Elizabethan followers of Roman satire went for something, but
The Franco-Roman mob of gentlemen. Boileau and his restrictive ideals for more, satire and translation were brought together through the half-way form which Boileau made perfect—the *Imitation*. It is here that the foreign Alexandrine begins to smooth, though not to strengthen, our couplet. These three kinds, satire, imitation, translation, become indistinctly divided when they are practised, in a common metre, by a syndicate of wits, the "mob of gentlemen" reinforced by some professional poets, for purposes ranging from personal aggression to literary criticism. Rosecommon,¹ Buckingham, Mulgrave, and Dorset, with Oldham and Dryden for assessors, formed a kind of loose society for stabbing—sometimes one another—with as much finish and taste as was practicable. The anonymous verse of the time shows a quantity of similar but less

¹ Translations largely in Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. xix.; imitations, &c., *ib.*, vols. viii.-x.

adroit Thuggism, going on in the corners of literature. Thus there is little breach of continuity in the forms that carry us from Rosecommon's "unspotted" and watery "lays" *On Translated Verse*, through the versions of the *Ars Poetica*¹ by Howes and of Vida by Pitt; through Oldham's transposition of Horace's work, "imitated in English," and of the *Eighth Satire of Monsieur Boileau*; through "Granville the polite's" lines *Concerning Unnatural Flights in Poetry*; up to *A Catalogue of our Most Eminent Ninnies*, by the Earl of Dorset. And Rochester's most alarming and un-borrowed lampoons are not hard thus to link to his *Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace*. Nearly all these aristocratic spirits also practised drama, in which they were not so happy. Nearly all, too, had a gift of lyric, which Pope, who bettered everything else he took from them, did not inherit. It is plain from Pope himself how the *Imitation*, the most specific of all the "Franco-Roman" importations into our verse, loosened the canons of translating on the one side, and on the other tended to cast satire into a ready-made framework, very free within rigid limits.

No celebrity of the time produced a thinner vintage of verse than Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (1633 ?-1685), whose original piece has been named, and who also translated the *Ars*. He might have been the figurehead of an English academy. His cold, sad, and reasonable counsels of hard labour and smoothness in the art of translating foretell the

¹ There is an *Art of Cookery*, an imitation—mean enough by William King, 1709.

practice less of Dryden and Pope than of Rowe, or even of Joseph Trapp. Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1637-1706), an honest friend of letters and also of literary strugglers, produced his *Song written at Sea* ("To all you ladies"), and more than one other good lyric, like "May the ambitious ever find." Dorset seeks to apply the old aspiring rhythms to the courtly and complimentary style. Sir Charles Sedley (1639 ?-1701) was one of the first in the field with his comedy *The Mulberry Garden*, and one of the last with his heroic play (on Antony), *Beauty the Conqueror*, and either case not the worst; and was also perhaps the last writer of the old compressed kind of essay (*On Entertainments*). He wrote some dozens of delicately furbished songs of the difficult light kind, "Get you gone, you will undo me"; "Love still has something of the sea"; and "Phyllis is my only joy." Sedley, in whose ears a gallant wind sang fitfully, also vainly forced his temper into satire. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, besides appearing as Zimri, suffered portraiture at the hands of Hamilton, Butler, Burnet, and Pope. He wrote chiefly prose. Besides his comedy, *The Chances*, there remains his singularly witty and uncivil *Conversation* with Father Fitzgerald, sent to convert him at the last. It illuminates the turn for burlesque discovered in *The Rehearsal*.

The treachery or cruelty of the clearest-cut figure amongst all these, John Wilnot, second Earl of
Rochester.
 Rochester (1647 - 1680), were tasted by Dryden, Settle, Crowne, and Otway, his literary clients; and his expertness in self-destruction.

which took premature effect, cannot be said to be unrecorded in his writings. These become harder to authenticate when upon Rochester is liable to be fathered every obscene application of wit and finish; but much of his genuine work is to be read in the collection of 1714¹ (such, liberally remarks his editor Rymer, "as may not unbecome the Cabinet of the Severest Matron"). Nothing is incorruptible in Rochester but his sarcastic insight and his sense of style. He has the soul of song, not only in measure but in kind, very far beyond his companions. Against the low spite of the *Session of the Poets*, in anapaests, may be set the Horatian *Allusion* already named, where, apart from his abuse of Dryden ("poet Squab"), he shows sound literary judgment. His *Satire against Mankind* is deeper than its original in Boileau, and his cynicism draws blood. He knew the sting and vanity of luxury, and in the midst of his Satanic reminiscences he expresses them: his mind, as his deathbed talks with Burnet show, wore no blinkers; and his finish, if not (owing to his lack of Dryden's skill with the couplet) all that his age believed, becomes perfect as his tone approaches the lyrical. The ditty "'Tis not that I am weary grown" has little like it for a pungency that is *malin*, yet for once not rancorous. His true songs, "An age in her embraces past," "Absent from thee," "All my past life," "I cannot change as others do," have not only the fine chasing possessed by his school in their record of a love fleeting as the clouds, but the solemnity of a compunction certain

¹ See too Chalmers, vol. viii.

that itself is fleeting also. "Faithless to thee, false, unforgiven, I lose my everlasting rest." Hence he has depth, and more of the incommunicable than any maker of songs between Herriek and Burns. An unfinished blackguard after all, he was tantalised by his higher moments. The philosophy of the verses *On Nothing* (which are perhaps touched by Buckingham) is sincere: they are not caprice or trick; some of their cadence, which Pope in his parody *On Silence* missed, may even have been with the translator of Omar Khayyâm:—

" But Turn-Coat Time assists the Foe in vain,
And, bribed by thee, assists thy short-lived reign,
And to thy hungry Womb drives back thy slaves again. . . .

Whilst weighty Something modestly abstains
From Princes' Coffers, and from Statesmen's Brains."

The Restauration, or the History of Insipids ("Chaste, pious, prudent Charles the Second"), is but the sprightly application of this temper to the time.

The costume of Horace and Boileau, as worn by these persons of rank and condition, was but a half-success, *Lyric science* instructive to Pope; but their lyrical gift, *and art.* which perished with them, was inherited in their blood. On the best lyric of the time, however, classicism tells. The escape from conceits and the greater instinctiveness of finish accompany the muffling of the higher and more passionate notes. A mood prevails of gallant and mundane sentiment, derived from the school of "natural, easy Suckling" and of Ben Jonson, and if it sinks often into a too palpable

snigger, it can rise into a ritual courtliness. What dies hardest is the old science of splendid rhythm; this outlasts the passions that gave it birth; and in Dryden, in Rochester, not least in Aphra Behn, and even in D'Urfey, is heard the earlier Caroline cadence. A Mr Charles Webbe is in 1678 still capable of writing—

“More love or more disdain I crave :
 Sweet, be not still indifferent :
 O send me quickly to my grave,
 Or else afford me more content,
 Or love or hate me more or less,
 For love abhors all lukewarmness. . . .
 Give hopes of bliss or dig my grave ;
 More love or more disdain I crave.”¹

That this is not exceptional may be seen by comparing Sedley or Dorset with the survivors of the old school; with Herrick, who lived on in silence till 1674; with Vaughan, whose *Thalia Rediviva* (1678) is an anachronism; with Cowley, who died in 1667, and the mouldering of whose fame can be traced in the successive criticisms of Dryden; and with Wither, the “Withers” who lived to be a misspelt proverb, outlived the memory of his superb talent for trochaic cadence, and after 1660 sent forth sad broken satires, such as *Echors from the Sixth Trumpet*. Above all, the technique of Dryden is always cunning and often magnificent. But Dryden, by nature manly and positive, wanders in many of his songs into a chuck-

¹ Quoted by A. H. Bullen, *Musa Prototropa*, London, 1889. This selection, chosen with a true ear, contains the best lyrics of Mrs Behn and the others.

ling lusciousness and even *saluté*. Down into this the heroic sentimental mood runs easily: the worst thing in it is the absence of passion; and it is enough to take Dryden's own confessions of repentance. Different are the mortal faults of *Alexander's Feast, or The Power of Music* (1697), the best admired of all the annual odes written for accompaniment at St Cecilia's festival. The deafening clatter of its shallow harmonies, commonest and heaviest in the anapaestic parts, its profusion of antithesis and Latinisms, and its violence trying to be strong, make it the type of rhetorical lyrics, and its popularity measures that tastelessness in the higher matters of poetry which distinguishes the age of good taste. It may serve as a foil to the splendid overture, hardly sustained though this be, of the *Ode to the Memory of Mrs Anne Killigrew*, where we feel how Dryden, despite his use of the words *candidate*, *probationer*, which are here only half-heated by the imagination, is the younger contemporary of Milton. Of the other odes of the time, the latest of any worth is Congreve's *On Mrs Arabella Hunt*, which is the usual irregular Pindaric. Congreve's latter odes, ostensibly written, like some of Jonson's, to ancient rule, are not so interesting as his *Discourse on the Pindaric Ode* (1706), one of the few counsels of regularity inspired in this time by a Greek rather than a Roman model. In the laxer kind, the first stanza of the *Poet's Complaint*, by Otway, is very pathetic and skilful in its movement.

There are yet two other kinds of verse in which Dryden approved his mastery. The English hymn of

the time cannot bear confronting with Gerhardt or the Scandinavians: the writing of Bishop Ken and others,

Hymns. whatever its associations, is of a different order; and the best hymnody is of the

stately rhetorical sort. It is also probably Dryden's.¹ It is hard to doubt his authorship of some of the unsigned hymns of the manuals of the English Roman Catholics. These are mostly in the graver octosyllabic distich used by Herrick and Marvell. Perhaps they ring a little metallic and Latin, but they have also the plangent tones peculiar to Dryden when he is moved strongly. In translation he is again premier, and his example is not swallowed up in that of Pope. His comments on Stapylton and Ogilby, his respective pre-

Translations. cursors in dealing with Juvenal and Virgil, show that he knew part of his high function to be the revival of poetical translating. The four volumes of *Miscellanies* (1684-1694) contain versions by his hand from Homer, Theocritus, Lucretius, Ovid, Juvenal, and Persius; and most of these authors left some trail on his receptive spirit. The great merit of his *Æneid* is this, that it repeats and responds nobly to the masculine heroic chord in Virgil, so often overlooked by those who are preoccupied with the diviner things in Virgil that Dryden misses. In its licence and its diffusion or dismissal of the sense, the version is Elizabethan, while in its frequent hollowness of diction it is of its own time. But it has

¹ See the Appendix by Professor Saintsbury in Dryden's Works, vol. xviii., which, together with the observations of Mr Orby Shipley and others, seems to me conclusive.

impetus and splendour; nor is Dryden inferior in turning some of the more biting parts of Lucretius; and in Juvenal and Persius, whom he handles with unstinted energy, he finds something of himself. The *Lucan* of Nicholas Rowe (1718), though often replunging into dullness, is one of the louder echoes of Dryden during the fame of Pope. But Pope was to set the key of a smoother and blander-sounding heroic, and translation, until Gray was to be a receipt rather than an art. In his *Fables*, Dryden applied his best Virgilian style to Chaucer and Boccaccio, and no poetry of his has been more acceptable. But his versions are only carried off by their gloss, and by the sound of the martial and declamatory parts: his gross grasp violates the Chaucerian shyness, his loud lips advertise the delicate fear and mystery of romance. What had Dryden to do with Emily hesitant in the temple of Diana, or the flame starting at the feet of Arcite, or the hell-hounds in their chase of the dim bared form hurrying through the forest?

*The Drama.*¹

After 1660 all the outward conditions favoured the retrieval of our drama, and gave it such a chance as it has never had again. The Puritan proscription was

¹ The "Mermaid Series," of various recent dates, contains select plays (with critical prefaces) of Dryden (ed. Garnett); Otway (Roden Noel); Lee (Gosse and Verity); Wycherley (W. C. Ward); Congreve (A. C. Ewald); Vanbrugh (W. C. Ward); Farquhar (Ewald); Etheredge and Lacy (Symons and W. C. Ward). See generally A. W. Ward, *History of English Dramatic Lit.*, 3 vols., 1899 (ed. 2).

replaced by the passion of the king and Court for all witty entertainment and scenic spectacle. Actresses were seen regularly on the stage, and serious plays were thus for the first time realised. The older English and contemporary French stages were revealed, and both of them were at once the natural model and booty of playwrights. The reading public were weary of the long romances, but ready to see them served up in heroic couplets; and the English people could gratify their long-smothered liking to behold themselves in the comic glass. The theatre, the focus of patronage, came to attract unendowed authorship, the more as it became identified with party. The novel was not yet in competition.¹

But the fates of tragedy and of comedy were separate. The great difference is, that comedy profited by classicism to reach its perfection, while tragedy, so far from doing so, fell between two stools. Tragedy did not find access to much in the time itself that could nourish its higher spirit; there is more of the tragic essence in Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* than in all Dryden. It therefore tried vainly to depend on past or alien models, and did not begin to conceive of measure and restraint as ideals until it was becoming too effete to profit by them, and all spirit worth controlling had fumed itself away. Comedy was truer to life, to style, and to theatrical art. It left masterpieces, it kept up and bequeathed a great

¹ See Beljame, *op. cit.*, whose chapter on *John Dryden et le Théâtre* is indispensable in studying the conditions of play-writing.

tradition, it reached expression, it became classical. Though more deeply Gallicised than tragedy, it is more independent. We have no Molière, but it is something to say that we outshone his French following during the reign of Louis XIV.

The continuity of the drama was saved less by Shirley, who lived on till 1666, than by Sir William Davenant and "restorations,"¹ Laureate from Jonson's death (1637) till his own (1668). He had re-insinuated play-acting during the last easy days before 1660, either by a declamatory tourney of speeches (*Entertainment at Rutland House*), or by quasi-operas gradually more expensive (*Siege of Rhodes*, 1656² and 1662), or by reviving his own decadent bloody tragedies and Jonsonian farces (*The Wits*). Davenant retained a strong sense of the carpentry of drama, and was a chief conspirator in the restoration of famous old plays and the importation of foreign ones. His medley (1663), *The Playhouse to be Let*, begins with an adaptation of *Le Cocu imaginaire*, and ends with a gibbering burlesque of the tale of Cleopatra. His previous twisting of *Much Ado* and *Measure for Measure* into one play, and his later dealings, Dryden being an accomplice, with *The Tempest*, are but items in a terrible chapter. Under the improvement of Shakespeare and Fletcher

¹ Plays in *Dramatists of the Restoration*, ed. Maidment and Logan, 15 vols., 1872-78. The collection also contains Wilson, Cokain, Laey, Marmion, and others.

² The dates here given are, unless otherwise defined, of representation, and not of composition or publication.

a decent instinct was disguised, and Dryden's *All for Love* shows its triumph. But these rude thumbings of the older fancy were not merely signs of obtuseness to poetry. The worst thing about them is the ruinous failure of mental nerve shown in handling the "fable." Sentimentalism, which is the reaction of the pampered sensual fantasy on the higher judgment, brands most of the tragedy of a corrupt time. It was due that the audience which liked Wycherley's *Mr Horner*, or Dryden's songs, should also encourage the Hon. James Howard to brighten the conclusion of *Romeo and Juliet* into a tragi-comedy, unhappily not now extant, but played on alternate nights with the original piece. Tate treated *Lear*, and Waller *The Maid's Tragedy*, similarly, and there the list can finish.¹

There are many amalgams, but three main kinds of tragedy are acted in succession. The first expresses

<i>Phases: 1.</i>	a fitful effort to invent original forms and
<i>heroic plays.</i>	to walk alone: it is the heroic play, depending on the heroic romance, and written in couplets. This lasts till about 1677; and by that time had begun the second kind, written in blank verse, and depending chiefly on the Elizabethan drama, which it either actually adapts or attempts to re-create. The best work in this species was written between 1678 and 1690. Afterwards, during the prime of comedy, extravagance and sentiment set in more and more, and provoked by revulsion the last phase, when tragedy, leaning on the French drama, or rather

¹ For more see Beljame. p. 59.

on an English misunderstanding of it, approaches petrification. Addison's *Cato* (1713) marks the height of this mode. The dates cannot be precise, and the periods overlap.

The heroic play can be duly studied in the four independent works of Dryden: *The Indian Emperor*, *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*, *The Conquest of Granada* (published 1676), and *Aurungzebe* (1676); in the *State of Innocence*, his version of Milton's version of the Fall; in the close of Otway's *Don Carlos*; and in the handling of the tale of Antony by Sir Charles Sedley (*Beauty the Conqueror*, 1677). The travesties are *The Rehearsal* and Butler's *Dialogue of Cat and Puss*: Fielding's *Tom Thumb* (1730), the best of all, confounds, at such a distance of time, the somewhat different rants appropriated to blank verse and to rhyme. The possible patentee of the heroic play, Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, is not much less of a shadow than Sir Robert Stapylton, whose *Hero and Leander* (1669) has its excited passages in couplets. The use of Asiatic or Moorish subjects, which offered a chance for pageant and *fanfare* of all sorts, as well as for the evolution of the shadowy-dæmonic hero; the indistinctness and ludicrous cataclysms of character; the oscillations between the point of love, which is everything but human, and the point of honour, with childish ambition by way of a parenthetical lust; the relapse of the supersensual into the brutal; the conduct of retort, courtship, and even soliloquy, by the means of heated and pointed argumentation, which gives

its distinguishing movement, here as elsewhere, to the metre; the rule of rant, with not infrequent glimpses of the really noble and Titanesque tradition of the drama,—these are the marks of a composite, friable edifice, a kind of glittering ice-palace, lit with flambeaux, and resonant with fife and drum, and tricked with bunting and bright frippery, golden rags of which can still be seen in its melted ruins.

The polite public was prepared by its favourite reading to salute the heroic play. The grandiosity of Corneille's drama went for something, *Romance*, and the success of the Alexandrine may have helped to bribe the English poets into using the couplet. But Lord Orrery and Dryden, as well as Lee and Settle in the unrhymed drama, drew much of their matter from a literature that their audiences knew already, the romances. The translations of *Clélie*, *Almahide*, *Ibrahim*, by Mdlle. de Scudéry, of La Calprenède's *Cléopâtre*, and others; as well as the masses of original romances in English, of which Boyle's *Parthenissa* (1654) is the biggest, Mackenzie's *Arctina* one of the shortest, and Congreve's *Incognita*, faintly burlesquing the kind, one of the best¹: all testify to a vogue which lasted from the day of Dorothy Osborne to that of Addison. The heroic play is the heroic romance, brought into theatrical compass, and lifted into metallic verse.

¹ See W. Raleigh, *The English Novel*, 1891, chap. iv., for these romances, which really belong to a pre-Augustan fashion, and are not discussed here.

It is the heroic romance turned *male*. The personages of Dryden are never open to the greeting offered to Clélia and Coeles, in Boileau's *Les Héros de Roman*, by the Frenchman who visits Minos, and finds that they are but "bourgeois de son quartier." The originals are also changed by Dryden's inveterate effort to retain passion, while at the same time replacing an imaginative movement by a logical or forensic one. "Egad," says Mr Bayes, "I love reasoning in verse"; and he well knew that his affection was shared by "persons of quality, and peculiar friends of mine, who understand what flame and power in writing is." The still unstaled *Richards* (1671), concocted by Buckingham and his sub-committee of wits, and burdening Dryden, whom their actors mimicked personally, with the follies of Davenant and the Howards in addition to his own, did not destroy the species. After about 1676, Lee and Otway, in the train of Dryden, began to drop rhyme and its rhetoric; but Crowne, Settle, and others sometimes kept it.

The couplet, after all, was a certain controlling force: it encouraged point. The blank verse that by degrees prevailed in our drama failed in control, and was prone to be extravagant, or weak, or both. The Augustan moderation is not to be heard in the blank verse tragedy of Dryden, Otway, Lee, or Southerne: what they sometimes attain is power and music; but the secret of Racine is far from them. The revival of older plays after the Restoration was a kind of *engouement*, though very far from thoroughgoing

2. *Blank verse
drama renewed.*

or discerning, and it extended far beyond the maltreatments of Shakespeare that have been mentioned. Jonson, who was felt to be duly regular and symmetrical as he stood, was often reproduced untouched. But it was chiefly his comedy that told; and the looser rhetoric of Fletcher, with its languid interrupted surge of metre—marked by the heavy spare syllable at the end of the closed line—fell in, like Fletcher's vein of feeling, with the general enervation of fancy. The revival (like that of the Horatian satire) runs through the whole scale of faithful renewal, adaptation by pruning of "barbarities," downright theft and garotting (see Otway's *Caius Marius*), and experiments in re-writing like those which called forth the best and worst workmanship of Dryden. *All for Love, or the World Well Lost* (1678),—his handling of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and his first piece in blank verse,—is fuller of the sense of life than any other Restoration tragedy, and shows Dryden, who could speak for his own time with such suppleness, only just failing to speak for a nobler one. The original *Troilus and Cressida* was too thoughtful for him; but its innuendo roused his emulation. Perhaps the notable invention of a sister to balance Caliban in *The Tempest* may be imputed to his partner of quality, Sir William Davenant. As to his original plays, the admired scene in *Don Sebastian* exhibiting a contest of generosity has a grandiose Spanish tone; and the serious passages of the *Spanish Friar* (1681) have some of the best of the gallantry of the Silver Age. Dryden could scarcely invent tragic persons that were real, but he could cut old

ones on occasion to the mode.¹ His other tragedies in blank verse, some of them operative, others topical, are to be remembered for their lyrics.²

The genius and the misery of Thomas Otway (1651-1685) were fed from a common source. He was
Otway.
 born in Sussex and schooled at Winchester and Christ Church; he failed as an actor, failed as a soldier, and flung himself on play-writing. His treacherous desertion by his patron Rochester baffled his career, and kept him in the penury which drove him wilder. His despised passion for the actress Mrs Barry gave him experience: it was the fuel for his tragic power, and helped to consume him. His six extant letters are splendid: in what Mr Roden Noel well calls their "maddened emotion," they remind us of those of the Portuguese Nun. Two conceptions hovered before the soul of Otway, whose sweet bells were so easily jangled: one was that older one, which seemed surely enough lost, of a fraternal vehement friendship between men; the other was that of a heroine possessed of the grace and sweet eloquence of Fletcher's women, with a true sacrificial dignity in addition. From the harmony or conflict of these two ideas are wrought most of the better effects in his chief plays, *Don Carlos* (1676), *The Orphan* (1680), and

¹ Cp. A. Tüchert, *John Dryden als Dramatiker* (tracing plots from the Scudéry romances), Zweibrücken, 1885; G. S. Collins, *Drydens Theorie und Praxis*, Leipzig, 1892; E. Döhler, *Der Angriff George Villiers auf die heroischen Dramen*, Halle, 1889. See too in *Englische Studien*, vols. xiii. and xv., P. Holzhausen on the heroic plays.

² *Works*, 3 vols., ed. Thornton, 1813. See Gosse, *Seventeenth Century Studies*, 1885.

Venice Preserved (1682). In the last scene of *Don Carlos* the couplet rhetoric burns itself freer of declamation and convention than in any other rhymed tragedy in the language. In the crisis of *The Orphan*, where the rival-brother interlopes at night in the guise of the bridegroom, there is a taint of the decadence; the situation is too much thought out, and everything that is thought is said. But the fate of Monimia, though she is but a piece of wronged patience, raises pity, and the play has a kind of feminine strength. In *Venice Preserved*, for long after held one of the greatest of our tragedies, and actually by many degrees the greatest written after Ford's, Otway learnt from Shakespeare, besides detail, the use of a powerful political background of ambition and conspiracy, playing with clear logic into the romantic interest. The scenes between Jaffier and Belvidera are the poet's most glorious visions of the love which he did not enjoy but understood. Pierre, in the same play, shows how Otway might have obtained a firmer grasp of character. The often reviled, yet not feeble, comic scenes between Aquilina and her effete senator, who is traditionally a travesty of Shaftesbury, seem to disclose the dreary grave features of the poor poet, feeling bound to tumble for his public, but not enjoying it. His other works are mostly comedies. He died wretchedly. There is an odd contrast between the rapid tide of his passion and his slowly-uncoiling metre. But Otway has the precious poignant note (for which nature sacrifices the performer) of anti-nomian rebellion and desire, unmistakable in English

verse from Marlowe to Blake, and in French verse from Villon to Verlaine.

The vagabond fates of Nathaniel Lee (1653 ?-1692) also take us back, like his rant, to the pre-Shakespeareans, while his heavy loaded lines and lack of style recall the decadence. But he has the virtue of being more intoxicated with poetry than any Englishman of his time. There is a measure of the *igneus rigor* in nearly all of his ten tragedies, and the best of them, *The Rival Queens, or Alexander the Great* (1677), is full of it. It is also to be felt in *Theodosius* and *The Massacre of Paris*. His personages and their passions are as little modulated as those of Kyd, and everything is at a strained pitch, which at last leaves the reader cold and melancholy. After Lee tragedy cools down, and the best work of the last decade of the century is the *Oroonoko* of Thomas Southerne (1696), which is a good deal more interesting than his more buskined effort—*Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage* (1694). *Oroonoko*, founded on the novel by Mrs Behn, heightens her undeniable warmth and sympathy of temper into very tolerable blank verse. This philanthropic (and unique) variety of the exotic play is concerned with the heroic loves of a noble coloured prince of Angola, and of his Imoinda. The prince has dignity, and the plots and counterplots are well contrived. In Nicholas Rowe, the first coherent or valuable biographer of Shakespeare, classicism begins to place the curb on sensibilities that are hardly strong enough to require it. Rowe had a scholarly intention of deal-

3. *Classicism:*
Rowe and
Addison.

ing in the chastened expression of pathos, and a certain sincerity. The *Flair Penitent* (1703) and *June Shore* (1714) are the plays that do him most justice. He is the last tragic writer of note who has any savour at all, though others, like Aaron Hill, the friend of Pope, accompanied him a little way. Addison's *Cato* (1713) is not only a well-known political event, but marks the chilling of the public taste in tragedy, and a meeting of extremes in the history of letters. The serious drama ends, as it had begun, in a variety of the Senecan tradition—that is, in regularity of form emptied of power, in moral sentences replacing the motley of character and humour, and in abstract versified prosing instead of the pageant of life. It is to be noted that as our early tragedy had passed, in Marlowe and his fellows, out of the Senecan into the true Titanesque, so in Lee it fell into the sham Titanesque before its final depletion.

The process to modern prose is nowhere more nicely registered than in the natural and sensitive conversation of the new comedy, where something
A new comic scene. is spoken like the living language of the day, as chosen by its masters. It is true that there is no complete breach, in point of style, with the wit-combats and repartee of the poetical drama, which were so well remembered by Dryden in his *Celadon* and *Florimel*, and by Congreve in his *Millamant*. But these echoes are exceptional; for the comedy of Shakespeare or Chapman had been rooted in lyrical or pastoral fancy and in a fastidious chivalry, of which there was no Restoration. With the drying up of

these springs, the humour that contemplates the whole world genially was more and more to be transformed into the wit and derision that scrutinise society. To the town, where the literary class rallied after 1660, the comic scene was closely circumscribed, losing the pleasant opportunities not only of greenwood, but of roadside and village inn-yard. The country, so far as it appears at all, is the natural preserve or cruising-ground of the town shark, in the guise of a person of quality, like Tom Fashion in *The Relapse*, or Aimwell in *The Beaux' Stratagem*. Few of the English playwrights escape from the blackguard-modish into the popular atmosphere; the advantages of a philosophic vagabond commerce with the real nation in its high-ways were reserved for our masters of fiction, as they were in France for La Fontaine and Lesage.

Upon all the phases of comedy plays the incessant influence of the contemporary French drama, reminding us in its profusion of the wholesale immigration of romantic matter in the thirteenth century. No Guido dalle Colonne lifting without acknowledgment from a *trouvère* could show more unconcern than our playwrights in their dealings with Molière, nearly every one of whose plays was in some way made use of. Any scrutiny of the debt to him or others would fill our chapter. *The Lying Lovers*, for instance, of Steele, is aided by *Le menteur* of Pierre Corneille; the curious *Esop* of Vanbrugh comes from Boursault's piece with the same title; and most of Dryden's *Sir Martin Mar-all*, that is not from *L'Étourdi*, is out of Quinault's *L'Amour indiscret*.

Lesser privateers, like Shadwell (who chose *L'Arrose*), and Mrs Behn, have never fully been recounted.¹ A few of these works, like Dryden's *Amphitryon*, approach translations. But most of them recompense a little of their blindness to the soul of Molière by a true and thorough adaptation to the English life and climate. The general undress of our comedy is not ill denoted by the frequent replacing of the Alexandrine with prose. The trouble, the complexity, the thought of Molière were notoriously unintelligible to all his English despoilers; but they use his art and his invention and his types to the measure of their powers, generally with a sound mercantile instinct of the adjustments that are wanted. Manly in Wycherley's *Plain Dealer* is so far, both in being a cad and in being free from self-satire, from his original in *Le Misanthrope*, as hardly to deserve being pilloried in the contrast; while the litigious widow Blackacre in the same play is in living volubility and electricity far in advance of the lady in *Les Plaideurs* of Racine. And though, again, the impudence of Valentine with Trapland, the usurer in *Lore for Lore*, is far beyond the pale scene in *Dom Juan*, whence it is suggested, such victories are exceptions, and the choicer intentions of the French are usually blunted. But it was by study in this school that the comedy of humours was promoted into the comedy of characters, and the ideals of wit and precision kept alert.

It is this promotion or transformation that is the

¹ See ample list in A. W. Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. iii. pp. 315, 316 (ed. 2.).

real history of our comedy from the Restoration till the death of Queen Anne. The revived
Phases:
 1. *Humours* play of humours was for a time desperate
and instruction. in its desire to be Jonsonian, moral, and realistic. Jonson was boundlessly admired because he seemed to have divined in advance the rule of restriction and symmetry, because he always treated comedy as medicinal, and because he fostered the love of external detail in his presentment of humours. On this device, in default of poetry and romance, comedy was ready to fall back for a time. Shadwell throughout, and Dryden in his *Essay* of 1668, do but state as believers and with fewer discriminations the old definition of humour which Congreve more critically notes as late as 1695, in his letter to Dennis: "A singular or unavoidable manner of doing or saying anything peculiar and natural to one man only." But Congreve knows that this is no longer the staple of comedy. Humour resides in the personage, he adds, not (as we should say) in the treatment; and it is not the same as wit, which he places in the conduct of dialogue. It is also distinct from affectation, which is not, like a humour, natural; the difference being like that implied in Dryden's lines,—

"The unnatural strained buffoon is only taking;
 No fop can please you now of God's own making."

All these ideas, differently compounded, rule in Dryden, Shadwell, Wilson, and Sir Robert Howard. Dryden's comic power is tentative but real, and it might well have grown; he had a true sense of

farcical movement and stage conduct, and his theories, showing his usual critical compromises, can be seen in his preface to his brightly managed play, *An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer*. His best comic persons (for he wrote no play good as a whole) are Melantha, the Frenchified lady, who learns new foreign words every morning, in *Marriage à la Mode*, and his Dominic, the gorbellied papistical hypocrite and go-between, rather basely invented to pleasure a Protestant house in the excited year 1681. But the tradition of Jonson was long sustained by the last and profusest of his sons, Thomas Shadwell (1640-1692), the friend and then the gibbeted foe of Dryden, and lastly his successor as Laureate after 1688. To put "six or seven distinct and excellent humours" in each play, and to be edifying, are Shadwell's ambitions. But the moral aim of his best-made comedy, *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688), whose Whitefriars scenes may stand with those in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, is a little marred when its hero is discovered to our eulogy for having deserted no more than two women. *Epsom Wells* (1675) contains one very masterly scene where "two cowardly sharking bullies" are driven to fight by a forged challenge sent in their names by two witty damsels; and *The Virtuoso* impales a new kind of humourist, bred of the Royal Society, and known to Butler but not to Jonson. But Shadwell is after all damned in the inheritance of Flecknoe, being common and hard to read despite his clumsy teeming invention. John Wilson wrote two good bust-

ling pieces, *The Cheats* and *The Projectors*, just after the Restoration, and perhaps has more real merit than Shadwell: *The Committee* of Sir Robert Howard (1662) is a bubble of rough humour, and semi-political: while D'Urfey and the actor Laey should barely here be named as comedians at all, any more than Ravenscroft and Southerne, but that they were fertile in Jonsonian tricks, and pervaded the minor stage till late in the century. But this school gradually receded in vogue, and even during its prime there were signs that it was not to be the true expression of comedy.

For the four great makers edited by Leigh Hunt are ushered in by Sir George Etherege,¹ envoy at Ratisbon, and a rakish fine gentleman, but *Etherege and Wycherley*, "of a sprightly and generous temper." Etherege records with easy light precision the conversation of his likes, of their ready mistresses, and of the country squires who come up to town for the maintenance of either class. *She Would if She Could* has a gay, slight, and mazy intrigue; but Etherege's chief figure is the hero of *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter*, produced in 1676. He, the first of modern fops in English fiction, who "finds a room the dullerest thing without a glass," lacks indeed the glazed and steady stare of his lineal descendant, Vanbrugh's and Sheridan's Lord Foppington, but he is one of the least mechanical creations of this preliminary school.

Restoration, as distinct from Revolution or "Orange"

¹ Or "Etherege"; *Works*, ed. Verity, 1888.

comedy, came to its full power in William Wycherley (1640-1715), who before 1676 established it very solidly by his four pieces, *Love in a Wood, or St James's Park* (1671); *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1672); by *The Country Wife* (1673), and *The Plain Dealer* (1675).¹ Wycherley pounds too savagely to win confidence for his satire, while as a moralist, though not without some sincerity in his bluster, he is in his temper too much a part of the world that he exposes. But he shows a superb progressive power and rancour in his representation of the town. His *Country Wife*, unparalleled for the device of Mr Horner, is his rapidest and rankest piece. Here, and in *The Plain Dealer*, and to a less degree elsewhere, Wycherley proves his "satire, wit, and strength" by the accuracy of his types, violent yet alive, like Mrs Pinchwife and M. de Paris; by his iron grip of strong crude situation, like that of the miser in *Love in a Wood*, who is blackmailed by a lady without receiving value; and by his fund of pure, rough-cut English, lacking usually any tolerable kind of perfume. He has the hard-headedness, the logical side of classicism, and all the rougher mental defects of his surroundings, and he leads to the comedy of wit. The sorriest of all his comedies was his connection with Pope a quarter of a century later, when the brute force of his mind seems to have decayed.

William Congreve (born in 1670 near Leeds), one

¹ For the dates of composition, as to which there is some dispute, see J. Klette, *William Wycherleys Leben*, Münster, 1883, as well as Macaulay's essay on Leigh Hunt's edition.

of the princes of unpoetical comedy, and a supreme professor of dramatic conversation, was schooled in Ireland and came over after 1688, beginning (1691) with a boyish novel of intrigue called *Incognita*; contributed to Dryden's *Jurenal* the *Eleventh Satire* in the long couplet, which he afterwards managed better, in the jeering vein, than any man of his time except Dryden and Pope; and flashed (1693) on the town with *The Old Bachelor* ("written some years before to amuse myself in a slow recovery"), produced at Theatre Royal, with Anne Bracegirdle, his great friend, playing. He became unpopular in the same year on account of his splendid and sinister piece, *The Double-Dealer*, but had for consolation the noblest of Dryden's short poems, containing the bequest of Dryden's literary throne and memory; repaired his vogue in 1695 with *Love for Love*, and exalted it undeservedly by his tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, in 1697; retorted ill on Collier, and wrote his last comedy, *The Way of the World*, in 1700, doing nothing afterwards but belated masques and pindarics, mostly bad. He retired from work, being only thirty, but "having had the misfortune to squander away a very good constitution in his younger days" (Swift); was the friend and admiration of Pope and Swift, as well as of Dennis and Addison, receiving the dedication of *Cato*; held sinecures for many years, and died in 1729, by general consent the champion of the last literary age.¹

¹ Ed. Street, 2 vols., 1897. D. Schmid, *William Congreve, Sein Leben und seine Lustspiele*, Vienna and Leipzig, 1897.

The trifle *Incognita*, with its intricate accurate plot of the Southern kind, full of surprises and breathless doublings, and with its hints of repartee, foretells the two chief distinctions of Congreve's plays. His four comic fables are his own, though their evolutions are too sudden to follow in reading, being often indicated in an epigram. Maskwell in *The Double-Dealer* is the most bewildering in this respect; but the worst Latin subtlety, as well as cruelty, is part of his character. *Lore for Lore* is as carefully developed in all its plots and in their connections as any great English comedy: the distinct interests of the astrologer, who is a Jonsonian type, of the notable sisters Frail and Foresight, between whom there is not the weight of a gold bodkin's difference (see Act ii. 9), and of Valentine Legend and his family, being perfectly interwrought. The play contains less of that salacious and vindictive villany that reappears in the Mrs Marwood of *The Way of the World*. But this latter masterpiece, while thoroughly well-built, has passages of a brighter humanity and a less portentous gaiety than Congreve is apt to affect, while its play of fence is finer—the "counters" narrower, the *ripostes* in better form and time—than anything he had done. Millamant, in the phrase of the day, has not only wit but nature; she leads the action, and she is full of the sympathy and charm which, as Mr Gosse has happily indicated, Congreve likes to reserve to at least one lady in each play—Angelica, Cynthia, Araminta—for the benefit of Mrs Bracegirdle. By these touches, and by some half-squandered superiority of spirit, Congreve escapes

at moments out of the bewildering impious world to which he is so faithful. *Love for Love* is fullest of the irony of attitude that we call Shakespearian, and it even has Shakespearian echoes; the dialogue of Ben Legend concerning his dead brother Dick being like a famous ejaculation of Justice Shallow, and the debate of Valentine on the rights of paternity, as well as his feigned madness in the guise of "Truth come to give the world the lie," being decidedly a stretch beyond the age of reason. But Congreve's style ranks him with the greatest of that age; its aroma clings to all situations, and is independent of foul or fair in his characters. It is felt alike in the tigerish amenities or mutual lacerations of his villains, in his favourite exhibition of the contact of folly with wit (Tattle and Mirabell, Angelica and Foresight), and in the baleful prattle of his schools for scandal. The monotony and dazzle that have been often reproached against him are due less to style than to a general petrification of feeling, and to the constancy with which, in his own phrase, "black blood runs temperately bad." "Wit, be my faculty," says one of his young men, "and pleasure my occupation; and let Father Time shake his glass." But this is not the real Congreve; it is his concentration on style, his gleams of superior perception, whether malign or sympathetic, that raise him as a writer above the only serious competitor in the same kind, Sheridan, who is deceived by the rhetoric of sensibility.

Congreve, then, is not as a rule gay; but gaiety is the strength of the two other comic playwrights of

the Revolution, who describe much the same world, without Congreve's bitterness, and without Wycherley's pretence of a vocation. Nearly all *Vanbrugh and Farquhar*, the work of Sir John Vanbrugh, the architect (1664-1726), and of George Farquhar (1678-1707), the Irish actor, was produced between Collier's protest and 1708; but they continue cheerfully impious and unaffected, conceding nothing to decency, but nothing, on the other hand, to the pressure of the sentimental. They remain disinterested. Collier has some reason to speak against the rather senseless main plot of Vanbrugh's finest play, *The Relapse* (1697), but it contains some of the capital scenes of all English comedy. There is certitude of stroke and completeness of finish in the whole passage between the Clumsy family and the Fashion family; while that between Dick Anlet and his mother in *The Confederacy* (1705) is inferior, not in spirit or ingenious conduct, but in the absence of any personage so convincing and perfect in all his manifestations as Lord Foppington. *The Provoked Wife*, with its rake-helly gang and Sir John Brute, is a kind of return towards Wycherley; and Vanbrugh's other pieces lean chiefly on intrigue of the exotic kind, the *Esop* (mentioned already) being his chief divagation into sententious comedy. His plays are very uneven, but when he is not serious and is away from his staggering verse, they are at their best wonderfully deft, and their talk is infallibly natural. Both Vanbrugh and Farquhar, though their style is not distilled, have more real pleasantry than Congreve, but their moral

detachment is not less than his. George Farquhar¹ has a slighter but a very real vein of situation and wit. His two best plays are *The Recruiting Officer* (1706) and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707). The latter of the two is much more bright and motley in its comic texture, and Farquhar has a wider knowledge of social types and a more open-air experience than Vanbrugh. His hand is light and quick, but he never grew to his full power: he has no thought and next to no feeling. But he does not calculate his cynicism far, and he is gentlemanly as the code went, or even further. *A Trip to the Jubilee* and *Sir Harry Wildair* are the very high spirits of comedy jaunting on the town.

Jeremy Collier's pamphlet, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*

*The Puritan
demurrer;
debates.*

(1698), appeared long before high comedy of these kinds had run its orbit, and it is the long-overdue resurgence of the shocked religious classes. The matter is the same as that of much English literary conflict from Marlowe to Byron; and the conflict seems likely to last in a nation that is so receptive to all immigrant influences that make for the irresponsible in art, and yet so wedded to the Germanic cult of morals and the family. Collier's book has that odd lack of perspective in arguing which might be expected from the reprisals of a half-learned man; but his main charges are sent home with a wit and urbanity that he was one of

¹ Ed. A. C. Ewald, 2 vols., 1892. Vanbrugh, ed. W. C. Ward, 2 vols., 1893.

the first pamphleteers to practise. He also raised a very genuine issue. Setting aside his objections to swearing by Mahound and to laughing at the stage parson, his main charges come down to the omnipresence of dirt and innuendo, to the preference for base heroes, and to the absence in dealing with them of the sane poetical justice of comedy. The first charge is quite true, though it cannot be really pleaded as hostile to the art of comedy. It amounts rather to saying that we had no Molière superior to his world, and that comedy was but subdued to the life that she described. The other charges have an artistic bearing that Collier did not heed. Can the comic mask remain, in Aristotle's words, "contorted without pain," and can it amuse, so long as the heroes, being vile, yet escape punishment with the author's sympathy? This is different from asking whether comedy is bound to be directly a reforming agent. The historical answer is the best: that the great schools of Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Molière do not thus challenge our antipathy; that Holberg, in this very age, does not; and that the absence of pain at such a spectacle as we often have to face would imply an audience that is itself inhuman. Charles Lamb's plea that the actors are in a feigned and irresponsible world, while it may truly apply to great tracts of the Augustan stage, fails when the bitter earnest of Wycherley's or Congreve's cynical disgust intrudes chorically on the scene. Yet even so, the Augustan comedy remains splendid in its wit and its fidelity to the life that lay before it.

The successes of *Hudibras*, of *Absalom*, and of Pope's *Iliad* are the only parallels in our period for the immediate literary stir that Collier raised; *The combat*, and a great mill in many rounds was fought for a quarter of a century. Its general issue was to vindicate Collier and to speed the decline of comedy. It is impossible to recount the replies and rebutters by eminent hands: from Congreve, who lost wit and temper, to Dryden, who ranged from confession to defiance; and from Wycherley, who may be the writer of the *Vindication of the Stage*, to Dennis, whose tract on the *Usefulness of the Stage* is the one other serious defence; and to William Law, who prolonged the attack as late as 1726.¹ Long before this the stout old comedy was over, and its force dissipated unequally in three main directions. One was modish artificial pastoral, like Gay's famous but rather unreadable *Beggar's Opera* (1728), and his *Polly*, both full of tunable songs that are not poetry. Another, already heralded, was farcical parody, which Fielding was to revive. The most important was the alliance of the weakened comic spirit with didactic sensibility. Steele's fund of effusive humorous sweetness was little realised in his plays, which are written expressly in aid of Collier, in order to "attempt a comedy that might be no improper entertainment in a Christian commonwealth." All his pieces have sounds of his mirth,

¹ For the completest history of these tracts see Mr Gosse's *William Congreve*, 1888, which is also the standard work on Congreve's life and art.

but they are weakly in constitution. *The Funeral*, with its excellent comic undertaker, was the first (1701); *The Lying Lover*, "damned," says the author, "for its piety," is the least witty; *The Tender Husband* gave the raw outline of two famous figures to Goldsmith and to Sheridan; and *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), though it drifts into a sermon, is full of a grave refined sensibility towards the point of honour that almost carries us back to Middleton, *A Fair Quarrel*, and the days of James I. There is less intention of teaching in the comedies of Colley Cibber, whose *Careless Husband* (1704) is the best in build and the airiest. But his labours, like those of Mrs Behn, Mrs Centlivre, and other mistresses, must here remain undetailed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENGLISH AUGUSTAN WRITERS.

CLASSICISM RIPE—THE PHILOSOPHICAL MÊLÉE—IDEALISM—CLARKE—
 EARLY DEISTS—SHAFTESBURY—MANDEVILLE—BENTLEY AND LEARN-
 ING—SWIFT—SWIFT AND HIS KIND—LATER WORKS—DR ARBUTH-
 NOT—LADY M. W. MONTAGU—BOLINGBROKE—NEW CONDITIONS :
 THE FAT YEARS OF LITERATURE—DEFOE—ADDISON AND STEELE—
 CONTRAST—POPE'S POSITION—EARLIER VERSE—THE 'HOMER'—
 THEOBALD AND 'THE DUNCIAD'—LATTER VERSE—POPE'S MENTAL
 MAKE AND HIS ART—POPE AS A METRIST—GAY—PRIOR—ANTI-
 CLASSICISM—NATURE REAPPEARING.

DRYDEN and the men of his time had been but uneasy revolutionaries, full of a redeeming truancy from rule and law, ever lapsing into pre-critical *classicism ripe*, thought or an unchastened magnitude of phrasing. The age of Anne has conquered these embarrassments, and moves forward to its proper perfections with a complacency almost unaltered. The logical or rational movement¹ conclusively invades expression; Pope and Arbuthnot, Defoe and Mandeville, Addison, all have this trait; and, after *A Tale of*

¹ For the philosophical history see L. Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., 1881.

a Tub, Swift has it. Rigid bounds are impossible: we can but chronicle some of the representatives of classicism, and observe how the classical prose was crowned under the new conditions of politics and society. The concentration of the audience reacted upon style. A great body of metropolitan listeners exacted clearness, consequence, and a polite bearing towards themselves. The tones of reverie, of solitary exploring thought, are lost or deadened. Prose returns into contact with the living speech of affairs, that has been churned smooth for the slingers in the surf of debate. The passion for improving the arsenal of aggressive language increases on every hand. To verse the same influences are transferred. The *apartness* of the poetical temper is gone; poetry is in the world, sometimes on the town. The work done is the refinement and full articulation of the rhetorical forms prepared by Dryden or Butler.

The new prosperity of literary men, their absorption in political parties, their power in politics, their hopes and fears and promotions, their congregation *The philosophical melée*, in the capital, have often been described,¹ and all powerfully determine the bent of letters. One effect of packing a large excitable public in a small space is the *mobilisation* of English thought. Locke made men feel that philosophy being a whole, there is no break all the way between first principles and behaviour. The English public has never been, till Darwin, so busy and vociferous over fundamentals: "occupied," in the just words of Mr Pattison, "with an intense and eager curiosity by speculation on the

¹ For these matters see Beljame, *op. cit.*

first principles of natural religion." A great disorganised war broke out, in which every one took a hand, from Bolingbroke to Gildon; and the issues were nothing less than the chief problems of thought. The psychology of Locke's *Essay* started one line of debate. The titles of English works on the immortality and substantiality of the soul would fill many of these pages. The scientific frontier between reason and revelation is in the hottest of the *mêlée*, and the deists, extending the claims of reason, say or insinuate that the results tell against the Church articles. The apologists like Clarke and Bentley try to prove the being of God either *a priori*, or from the world as understood by the new science. The dispute over human free-will is one of the *fovi* of the opposition to Spinoza and Hobbes. Theodicies abound, and the vindication of providence is mixed up with the dispute on moral psychology waged between Mandeville and the optimists:—Is evil providential, or is it, again, avoidable; and is human benevolence real?

The *New Theory of Vision*, by George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne (1685-1753), came out as early as

1709, the *Principles of Human Knowledge*

Idealism.

in the next year, the *Three Dialogues* in

1713. But, despite his personal alliance with the wits, Berkeley is alien to all of them, and is not for this book; his greatness as a writer lies in his reunion with the Hellenic rather than with the French or Roman temper, while the turn that he gave to the dialectic of Locke brings in a wholly fresh strain of philosophic thought. We can but note

the slender link that allies Berkeley with the idealism of the elder Cambridge men. This may be found in the belated Platonist and poet, John Norris, rector of Bemerton, who adapted Malebranche in his *Essay towards the Theory of an Ideal or Intelligible World* (1701 and 1704). Norris tries, through the process of *seeing in God*, to connect human intelligence with his dream-world of archetypal ideas. A sequestered soul, with a borrowed beatific vision, he is original in his eloquence, and here are perhaps the last sallies of the Cambridge fountain of Platonic poetry.

The chief English philosopher between Locke and Berkeley is Dr Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), whose

*Discourse Concerning the Being and Attrib-
utes of God* (the Boyle Lectures, 1704-5)

has only been obscured because the geometrical method went out of the mode, and the whole issue was transformed by Hume and Kant. Wolff in Germany, and perhaps Ferrier in Scotland long after, bear traces of Clarke's rigidity and lucidity, his grip of consequent reasoning, and the serried, striking development of his thought. The scholastic method disguises his true point of departure, which is a stately, if cold, vision of *order* in a universe rationally built, an order which the rational man has to imitate. Clarke's power is greatest in his proofs that an eternal and infinite existence is self-evident, and that moral principles may exist, even independently of the divine will. His attacks on Calvinism and Manicheism can still be read as masterly argument, like

his defences (against Henry Dodwell) of the soul's immortality, and his controversial correspondence with Joseph Butler (who also lies without our limits). His correspondence with Leibniz, published (1717) in French and English, covers all the issues debated between the two chief living apologists. The inordinately popular *Religion of Nature*, by William Wollaston (1722), is a depressing extract of Clarke's learned reasonings. The other philosophical defenders of Christianity may be fairly exemplified by the curious from the long series of Boyle Lectures, and vary from Bentley, with his formidable union of contempt, knowledge, and power spoilt by temper, to cheaper attempts at "physico-theology," after the manner of Ray and Boyle. There are also erudite churchmen, like Daniel Waterland, who wrote his *Critical History of the Athanasian Creed* (1724), but amongst them no notable writer.

The Boyle Lectures embody the official attack made by the battalioned divines and scholars upon the
 obscure and paltry heralds of later thought.

Early deists. The early deists bespeak a true protest of reason, and blow a feeble horn to its advance. They began to state issues which afterwards could not be put by. They had not enough weight or style to fulfil their confused and peering purpose, which was to empty doctrine of legend, and morals of mutability. They were stopped by the law, by the stigma of atheism, and by their own insignificance. But they have the double effect of driving some of their chief assailants, like Clarke or Leslie, to assert the test of

reason more clearly than would have else been necessary, and of further perplexing the shifty cross-currents of thought. The slight, vagabond Toland carries the dialectic of Locke further than Locke may have desired; Clarke proved too much from reason to please the deist, and not enough from revelation to content the orthodox. Swift, the friend of Bolingbroke, sneers the deists into silence, and Pope, his other friend, though reared a Catholic, distils deist¹ formulae into the *Essay on Man*.

Charles Blount (1654-93), the *doyen* of the lesser deists in this age, in his chief work, *The Oracles of Reason* (1693), not unjustly disclaims all eloquence of form, and seeks to show that Moses wrote "not according to physical truth." His *Animus Mundi* (1678), a review of the pagan opinions on pantheism, may be mentioned as containing the sentence that "some authors are of opinion that man is nothing but an ape cultivated." Blount read Montaigne and Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and in his notes on the life of Apollonius of Tyana seems to insinuate that miracles are either all true or all false. Charles Leslie² shows, in his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists* (1698), a battering style and a strong prosaic pertinence: it is an appeal not to authority, but to unmitigated reason and evidence in support of the truth of the New Testament. Leslie's "four marks" of the authenticity

¹ See Lechler, *Geschichte der Englischen Deismus*, Stuttgart, 1811. For the diverse meanings of the term "deist" see Clarke's book, and also Bishop Gastrell's Boyle Lectures (fol. 1739, vol. i. p. 351).

² *Theological Works*, 1721, 2 vols., reprinted Oxford, 1832, 7 vols. *Short and Easy Method*, often reprinted, as by S.P.C.K., 1865, &c.

of a miracle crudely anticipate a later line of pleading. He had a dialectical gift, but was scarcely a scholar or a thinker. Of over thirty works by John Toland, only one, *Christianity not Mysteriorious* (1696), is remembered, and that partly because it was "presented," condemned, and burnt. Toland was treated with much less respect by his own countrymen than by Leibniz, and their correspondence shows him to be one of the few Englishmen who were acquainted with Giordano Bruno, whose *Spaccio* he retails with a terrified omission of the great sceptic's name. Toland is timid if acute, and in supporting "reason" never names the articles that reason must repel; but he squandered some scholarship, and even a paradoxical cleverness. Locke, so hard on Toland's improvidence and conceit, is buoyant to excess in his hopes for the future of Anthony Collins, his young and cherished disciple. Collins suffered the rage of Bentley and the derision of Swift; he was vague in his reading and reasoning, and uncertain in his irony. But much of his best-abused heresy is only a restatement in fresher terms of the old liberal Anglicanism; for he pleads the innocence of error, the diversities of belief, and the paucity of fundamentals. His chief treatise, *A Discourse of Free-thinking* (1713), had been preceded by an *Essay concerning the Use of Reason* (1707). His *Inquiry into Liberty and Necessity* is his most consecutive work; and his *Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1724), with its attack on the letter of prophecy, merits naming for the new storm of debate that it portended.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl Shaftesbury¹ (1671-1713), may have learned from his friend and teacher Locke the humane feeling that determines his bent in moral speculation. His aim in the *Enquiry Concerning Virtue* (1699) is to enforce the happiness of disinterested action, and the brutishness and misery of the self-regard which Hobbes had announced to be the tyrant of the will. He redeems the honour of the word "enthusiasm," finds in it the divine spur of action, and presses forward to realise an ideal harmony of human nature. But this seems to entrap him into fancying an actual harmony, its counterpart, in the arrangements of the world. He thinks that a rarefied theism, unreferred to revelation (and counter to "demonism," where the directing power, the popular God, is evil), is the best explanation of the existing moral sense. His ruling visions, of order, of harmony, of the beauty of the Whole, take on a Platonic colouring. Despite a show of system, his transitions are emotional, not philosophical. His eloquence is that of the noble amateur without temperament; but his high-minded sentimentality, like J. S. Mill's, was a timely medicine to his own generation. All his ideas are summed up in the *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), which contains, besides the *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* and the *Enquiry*, odd miscellanies like the *Advice to an Author*, as well as *The Moralists*, a rhapsody to the attenuated God of Shaftesbury's own

¹ T. Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 1882. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, 1885, vol. ii.

creation. His easy optimism and lack of experience laid him open to the mauling of a rough, remarkable adversary, Bernard Mandeville (1670 ?-
Mandeville. 1733), a Dutch physician who came to England in youth, and naturalised himself tenaciously in the language. Mandeville's style subserves accurately his brutal gift of precise observation, and his honestly paradoxical intellect. His invective against the gin pest, his "conversation of a spruce mercer and a young lady, his customer, that comes into his shop," and his picture of the watermen hustling the customer newly come to town, have a rabid humour like Smollett's. His analysis of pride, sexual shame, and envy might have been carved out of not the cleanest corner of the mind of Swift. And Swift's verse often resembles *The Grumbling Hire, or Knaves turned Honest* (1705), reissued with prose *Remarks* in 1714 as *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*. In answer to the attacks on this work, which was presented to the grand jury of Middlesex for blasphemy and immorality, the author published a *Vindication*, expanded later into six heavy *Dialogues* (1729). Mandeville's radical paradox is stated by himself in several inconsistent forms, in all of which he aims at deriding those who ignore human badness and drop into an eager feeble justification of things as they are. Society, or the hive of bees, wins wealth and prestige amongst its fellows, but only by being built up on a service of mutual rapacities and knaveries; for when Jove by miracle turns it honest, its power departs. Mandeville tries to explain away the implications, but really

ends in a coarse kind of Hobbism, in which he is confirmed by the current fallacy that prodigals and wasters are good for trade. Writing in an elegant generation, Mandeville has the make of the scientific observer, and the wish to understand what he knows. It was less easy for Berkeley and Law to dispose of the facts of humanity that Mandeville cited than to show what he ignored.

The works cast up by one or other of these debates are multitudinous. Apologists like Archbishop King (*De Origine Mali*, 1702); nonjurors like Henry Dodwell, who propounded that the soul, naturally mortal, was made otherwise at baptism; the swarm of other little writers like Coward and Broughton who debated on its nature, and some of whose strife is rallied in Prior's *Alma*; and stray idealists like Burthogge,—must be studied in histories of philosophies or monographs.¹ During the phase of thought whose lower limit is bounded by the beginnings of Berkeley, of Butler, and of Shaftesbury's successor Hutcheson, the dust of these confusions rises and settles, and the problems of speculation are cleared for restatement. But, saving for Berkeley, the chief writers of the time are outside pure philosophy, as well as outside learning. One of these writers, however, himself a reasoner, weighs down all that uninstructed modish contempt for scholarship which taints so many of the rest.

¹ *L'Idéalisme en Angleterre au XVIII^e Siècle*, by Georges Lyon, Paris, 1888, contains a very complete study of writers like Norris, Burthogge, and Arthur Collier (*Claris Universalis*, 1713).

Amongst our men of learning from Selden to Pattison, there is no bolder and more victorious writer of English than the chief of our classical critics, Richard Bentley,¹ Master of Trinity, Cambridge (1662-1742). His editions of Horace (1711), of Terence (1726), of Manilius (1739); and his unpublished notes on Homer and Aristophanes and the New Testament,—are only part of his work, which may be said to have opened a new chapter of humanism. Bentley promoted that liberation of the ancient remains from corrupt matter, and that restoration of the real bequest of the classic world, which have since his day formed the great ends of scholarship. His daemon of textual divination did not always hold him back from rashness, and it led him to perdition when he mishandled Milton. But into the task of purifying the classic remains from error, he pressed his complete knowledge of the matter of ancient literature and life. He knew so much that his powers—which were exerted as early as 1691 in his *Letter* to Mill, and shown on the field of battle in 1699 in his great *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*—were quite beyond the gauge of literary society. The immediate end of the *Dissertation* was to refute Charles Boyle, who had denied that a previous pamphlet of Bentley had shown the spuriousness of certain letters ascribed to Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum. It was thus the last term in a war of pamphlets, which has been described by Macaulay in his *Life of Atterbury* (an accomplice against Bentley), and more truly and fully by Dr

¹ R. C. Jebb, *Bentley*, in *English Men of Letters Series*, 1882.

Jebb. But Bentley's¹ book showed two qualities besides, which are seen in all he wrote. One is his generalship as a scholar, his Napoleonic power of massing, from the whole of both classic literatures, all that bore on a point at issue. The other was his control of English, which is also to be judged from his religious writings. These consist of his *Remarks on Collins' Discourse*, and his Boyle Lectures of 1692, both of which works are masterly. Bentley's style perfectly answers every demand of the rougher fighting intellect, backed by an invincible character. He Latinises, and with some pomp, in his apologetics, but the *Dissertation* is full of rough idiom, that satisfies the sense like Cobbett's; and he dismembers his victim with the same kind of humour. His rank as a writer was not much more acknowledged in his own time than his rank, as the successor of Casaubon, among European scholars. But for him, the weight of English learning in his own day would be chiefly patristic or scientific, or of the anti-critical kind that had hung round the neck of Cudworth. There had been stray Grecians earlier, like Thomas Stanley, a truly poetical translator, the first who had attempted (1655-1662) a history of philosophy, and the editor of *Æschylus*; Dupont, earlier yet, who put the book of Job into Greek verse, and whose *Homeri Gnomicologia* (1660), a collection of sentences from Homer with rich illuminations from the rest of the classics, was much in acceptance; and editors, more or less critical, of

¹ *Works*, ed. Dyce, 3 vols., 1836-38. The *Dissertation*, ed. W. Wagner, Berlin, 1874 (Eng. tr., 1883).

Longinus, Apuleius, and Thucydides. But the tenure by Bentley, in succession to Barrow, of the Greek chair at Cambridge was the signal for the invasion of criticism and system into Greek study, and of the groundwork being laid for escape from the Latin monopoly. But we now pass to the prose of pure genius.

Imagine, by some reversal of the centuries, a well-equipped Athenian, neither facile in sentiment nor squeamish, loving mordancy and ribaldry in their place, and alive to the charm of masterly order, development, and control; imagine him coming on a translation into sound adequate Attic of the works of Swift,¹ evidently a master of style, able to hold up his head with the greatest, and leaving an indelible print on the mind! What would the Greek think when he read of the *Yahoos*, of *Traulus Lord Allen*, of the *Legion Club*; or even the *Journal at Holyhead*, or the *Directions to Servants*? Human life in its physical repulsiveness no Greek had described with so intolerable an acuity of sensation; and those Greeks to whom life seemed a light

¹ Hawkesworth and other editors (1755-79) first produced the *Works* in 25 vols.; revisions then followed; Sir W. Scott's ed. (with *Life*), 19 vols., 1814, 1824; and Roscoe's, 2 vols., 1849. The *Prose Works*, ed. Temple Scott (Bohn), 8 vols. now in progress, is the most critical issue. Bibliography is very difficult, for Swift hardly ever signed his books. See S. Lane-Poole in *Bibliographer*, vol. vi.; also L. Stephen in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, and his *Swift* in *English Men of Letters*. Johnson, Macaulay, and Thackeray are all warped or incomplete both in facts and criticism. Sir H. Craik's *Life* (1885, 1894) is the fullest and soundest, and J. C. Collins's study, *Jonathan Swift*, 1893, is a real contribution. Against the theory of Swift's marriage, see A. von Wollfersdorff-Leslie in *Anglia*, 1896.

or vain thing had also felt it solemn and tragic, the prey even of some divine necessity. But this writer makes no reference to beauty, never to return at all to the principle of awe and the divine in things; would he not then seem a monster? In style, sculpture without beauty; in temper, benevolence without love; mastery of intellect without serenity—by stating these opposites we are not much closer than such a critic to a real divination of this mysterious figure, whose artistic form is transparent and perfect, who has written himself down at much length, but has never been described, and perhaps never will be. Crowning the accomplishment of the purely prose genius in English, he stands apart from his environment, like an *Agonistes* of the older drama.

The earliest real writing of Jonathan Swift (born in Dublin, 30th November 1667) is to be seen at the end of his *Ode* on Sir William Temple's illness (1693); his last is in his final letters to Mrs Whiteway, ending 13th January 1741; he died imbecile (not mad) on 19th October 1745. His first period of production ends with the reign of Anne (1714); its chief fruit is *A Tale of a Tub*, which Swift states, perhaps in play, to have been written in 1696; but he was then at incredible pindarics and stiff academic pamphlets. With the *Battle of the Books* it came out in 1704. The *Tale* is a derisive apologue, worked out with endless riotous wit, if with too much system in its main fabric, against Rome and Calvin, Peter and Jack, but telling also by repercussion of blasphemous satire against Lutheran orthodoxy (Martin). In the interspaces there plays a

free destructive intuition, deadly against certain permanent types, like the cheap sceptic, or the cheap author and wit who hopes for fame from Prince Posterity ("but great numbers are offered to Moloch"). The region in which Swift moves throughout this fierce and fitful comment on the whole human farce is a puzzling one, neither that of the discursive reason nor of the free poetical fantasy; but the book is the purest expression of his genius. Thus far he was a comfortless gallery spectator of the farce, without a career; he was the grandee Sir William Temple's client or ex-client, with empty pockets and a well-shaped presentiment of human gracelessness. His turn, here and afterwards, for the indecent, is probably a reflex symptom of the physical frigidity which must never be forgotten in judging his life, but which raises as many mysteries as it explains. In the *Battle of the Books* the vein of the *Tale* has sunk to the mock-Homeric; learning, and "a malignant deity called Criticism," were pelted by Swift and his set on ignorant theory. In the Bickerstaff predictions against Partridge, who suffered a bitter burlesque death-in-life at his hands, Swift wears the unmoved visage proper to all his humour; but here it hides his fury against the little folk who represent a great swindle. The same air and the same temper are victorious in his *Argument against abolishing Christianity*, where his butts are the feeble deists. Swift's other tracts of this time, less ironical in tone, show the hardening of his political Anglicanism, and his disquiet in the Whig camp. Partly through defeated ambition, chiefly

from tenacity to the Church, Swift moved away to the Tories, and was rewarded by power, which he imperiously exercised, without office. The *Journal to Stella*, consisting of sixty-five weekly diaries sent to Esther Johnson (September 1710 to June 1713), shows Swift in this the happiest part of his life, and imposes admiring respect. He played the Tory game honestly to the end, his pride was well in place with Bolingbroke and Oxford, and he gave his spare time and sympathy to the help of obscure merit. Swift's contributions to the *Examiner* are the first and best articles periodically written by a master of English letters in order to form party opinion. Defoe and Steele have not enough style to contest the claim. Before the voter whom he wishes to persuade, Swift represses the more alarming sallies of his irony; the genealogy of a political lie, "sometimes of noble birth, and sometimes the spawn of a stockjobber," is almost the last passage in his works where the free, as distinct from the logical imagination, has impassioned play; henceforth a certain aridity and system appear in his wit. His *Letter to the October Club*, meant to curb the foolish wing of the Tories, and *The Conduct of the Allies*, a piece of pure party pleading without much decoration, form, together with *The Last Four Years of the Queen* (published 1758), the chief of his other works on English politics. *The Public Spirit of the Whigs* ended a dispute which Steele may have regretted to provoke (see the *Importance of the Guardian*). In all this Swift serves his party with full conviction, yet without being overcome by party definitions. He was

transported, by way of promotion, to St Patrick's. He wrote *Some Free Thoughts on the Present State of Affairs* in 1714, just before the Tory crash.

Swift bitterly digested his Irish exile during some years of silence, wreaked his tyrannous benevolence on his chapter, and gave himself occasion to write the lines *Cadenus* (Decanus) and *Vanessa*. The mysteries of his refusal of Esther Vanhomrigh, and of his alleged formal marriage to Stella, are not solved. But these transactions, with whatever measure of cruelty or error, ever show the ascendancy of reason. The fund of passion in Swift was diverted to friendship, to the hatred of man as he commonly is, and to a contemptuous and angry pity for the oppressed. These are the three springs of his remaining writings, which contain his personal letters and verses, his works on behalf of Ireland, and *Gulliver's Travels*. The *Lebensanschauung* of all these compositions is the same.

Men, we gather, are naturally irrational, indisposed to virtue, and unfit for power. Only among the Houyhnhnms are "friendship and benevolence not confined to particular objects, but universal to the whole race." But men are busy with living on each other, with lusting after precedence, and deceive themselves, when oppressed, with shows. The methods vary which are to be used against those in power in defence of their isolated and despicable victims. The *Character* of Wharton shows one way: it is very direct. Another is to conduct gravely a disgusting assumption, such as the use of infants for an article of diet, to its mechanical conse-

Swift and
his kind.

quences; but in the *Modest Proposal*, &c. (1729), Swift forces himself to relish his own horrors: he is like a man striking himself on a bare wound, he trains himself not to shudder. Usually he takes a simpler attitude; but he seldom speaks in person, being full of complicated shame and reserve. It becomes second nature to him, especially in his Irish pamphlets, to act the plain man, modest and tentative, amazed when he slowly realises how bad things are. The citizen mind with its timid honesty, like the menial mind with its inanity and smallness (dissected in the *Directions to Servants*), hold no secrets from him. He feels them in the mass like an orator or comedian. In the *Proposal for the Use of Irish Manufactures*, the first in his campaign against the Government, this posture can be traced, but it is fully seen in the *Drapier's Letters* (1724). The middle-class writer is made to goad himself, from a survey of the evils of Wood's brass halfpence—which are often set forth with a deliberate and strategic dishonesty—to that of the whole Irish question. These *Letters* are the plainest and least embroidered of classic pamphlets, but are full of profound varied policy, and their success gave Swift a popularity which he was too perverse or too strong to enjoy.

From Lucian, and Cyrano de Bergerac, and all predecessors who describe an inverted Utopia under the form of a journey, Swift differs by his
Later works. motive, or rather by the collection of motives that divide the *Travels of Gulliver* (1726) into separate works. The club of Scriblerians may have

to answer for the academies of Laputa and Lagado, which come within their programme against pedantry; but Swift alone can assume the trifling gravity that befits the first two voyages, the most truly playful of his writings. He alone has the sincerity of philanthropy turned sick, that can conceive the Struldbrug or the Yahoo. The disenchanted idealism of the whole book gives it some unity. The art of *Gulliver's Travels* moves within the limits which are imposed by a sterilised imagination, but are partially broken through by an overpowering humanity. The whole story is told as though by a master-mariner, of Redriff, deficient in imagination, and suffering the surprises of a very literal mind.

Latterly, Swift did best in his verse; it is the most powerful of *anti-poetical* verse that can be imagined. He uses metre, usually Butler's metre, with resource and accuracy, in order to produce pain rather than pleasure. He speaks without a mask in *The Legion Club* and the *Lines on the Death of Dr Swift*. A hard, lowering, icy light broods upon his world. A strange, minute, pedestrian fancy, rigidly preferring to delineate the ugly, is strangely united with the accent of honesty and strength. His various birthday verses to Stella are nearest to the usual forms of humane compliment.

All the writing of Swift has an immeasurable stamp of will. He suffers nothing to appear in it that is dead matter or inexpressive of himself. A peculiar realistic memory and dominant intellect give him his minute tenacity to point, detail, and subtlety. But

his prose also has rhythm, arrangement, lightness, concision; it has, in fact, a power of statement that is beyond competition in English, if more philosophical or poetical minds be excluded. Swift's correspondence with his friends is in its comic and dramatic aspects one of the most enduring fragments of our literature; it also shows that his literary power was spontaneous, that he was born free. Hence his ease, his classical transparency of style, apart from the truth or dignity which is often absent from his matter. But out of the intricacies of his nature, which still vainly challenge divination, there shine a radical veracity towards friend and cause, a profound, scandalised humanity, and a peerless independence:

"Seht ihn nur an!
Niemandem war er unterthan!"

The satiric power of Dr John Arbuthnot¹ (1667-1735) was long secreted, and did not appear until after 1711, when he met Swift; but it is his own, and it expresses his union of humane gifts, his weight and knowledge, his wit and sympathy. The Scriblerus Club, including Swift, Pope, Atterbury, Gay, and Congreve, was formed in 1714, against "all the false tastes in learning," and with the special design, echoed from Butler, of bundling together in one travesty the weakness of a pedant who should be also a smatterer and without common-sense. Only Arbuthnot of them all knew enough to satirise bogus knowledge. He wrote soundly on

¹ *Life and selected Works*, ed. Aitken, 1892.

geology, ancient coins, the laws of chance, and the uses of mathematics; his medical science was unusual, and he was physician to Queen Anne and to most of his friends. The information in the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* (only printed 1741) is profuse, and is nearly all fully assimilated for the purpose of travesty. Though the depth and fulness of Rabelais are absent, there is something of his temper and geniality on a small scale; the "soul dwelling" there is not in so "dry a place" as Swift's. The dissertations on playthings and on philosophers show two sides of Arbuthnot's light learned humour. "There should be a retreat for substantial forms, among the gentlemen ushers at court; and there are indeed substantial forms, such as forms of prayer, forms of government, without which the things themselves could never long subsist." The medical proceedings at the birth of Martinus served as a Rabelaisian precedent for Sterne's Dr Slop. Arbuthnot's chief work, *The History of John Bull*, came out in 1712 in a series of five unsigned pamphlets (*Law is a Bottomless Pit, John Bull in his Senses, &c.*), and was an exhaustive Tory apologue, very homely and bourgeois in language, very lively, and with a Chinese complexity of detail, upon the war. The sentences are expressly short, crawling, or jerky, like those of the electorate. The names of Humphrey Hocus, the attorney, for Marlborough, Nic. Frog for the Dutch, Peg for the Scots and Kirk, the sister of Mr Bull, are chosen in the same intent. The squalid side of the great international issues is related by a good-tempered partisan as reduced to its pothouse terms, under

the guise of a lawsuit. There is more keenness and seriousness in the portraits of Discordia, Polemia, and Usuria, the daughters of Mr Bull by his first wife, the Whig ministry. The *Epitaph* on the ruffian Chartres, and several other trifles, save Arbuthnot, despite his "carnivoracity" and gaming, from any imputation of lack of nerve: it was his strength and honesty as much as his profound friendliness that won the regard of Swift and Pope. The scantier remnants of Francis Atterbury (1672-1732), Bishop of Rochester, include his pamphlet and pulpit oratory, which is of the plainer school but powerful; (probably) the preface to Waller's poetical works in the edition of 1690, which attests the current views with nicety; and his natural and pious letters. He was a man of action, who wrote with expert elegance.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, born Pierrepont (1689-1762), left little of moment in the usual forms *Lady M. W. of writing*, except her descriptions of the *Montagu*. Court of Hanover; but these, like her maturer letters after her departure from England in 1739, carry her beyond the prime of the classical age. Her *Letters*¹ written during the embassy to Constantinople, and those she exchanged with her husband, with her sister, and with Pope, show her full impetus and piquant initiative of mind. Despite her dealings with Oriental poetry, she had an eye for colour and grace, a mind for men, institutions, and the general comedy,

¹ Ed. Moy Thomas, 2 vols., 1861, *i.e.*, 3rd and improved ed. of Lord Wharncliffe's, 3 vols., 1837. Letters to Pope in Courthope and Elwin's *Pope*, vol. ix.

and a swift decisive sprightliness in description. Her intellect, of the piercing, intolerant kind, came to rule in her character; and by virtue of its very sincerity she was dissatisfied with the world that she was born to chronicle. Her passionate devotion to her daughter preserved her from the petrifying spring, and she was too strong to be satisfied with the power of wreaking her wit; her life was one of quarrels; her earlier sensibility was baffled; her circumstances did not mend her temper ("my whole life has been in the Pindaric style," alternate in fortune). But her literary mastery grows, the learned allusiveness disappears, and her admirable veracity and distinction of speech never leave her.

The authorship of Henry Saint-John (born 1678, created Viscount Bolingbroke 1713, died 1751) hardly begins till after his fall and flight in
Bolingbroke. 1714. His rise in Parliament, his secretaryships, his alliance and feud with Harley, belong to history. His own version of his dealings with the Jacobites ("as a pure loyal Tory with no alternative") may be read in his *Letter to Sir William Wyndham* (1753). At La Source, near Orleans, where he lived (1718-23), he talked with Voltaire, and wrote his *Letters to Pouilly*, his *Letter on Tillotson*, and his *Treatise on the Limits of Human Knowledge*. Returning home, he settled at Dawley, became the guide and philosopher of Pope, and the chief exponent of the hypocrisies shared by Pope and others concerning the beauty of the retired life of thought. He was first the secret and then the more open leader of the able but futile opposition to

Walpole, and in this interest wrote his papers in *The Craftsman*, as well as most of his *Dissertation on Parties* and *Remarks on the History of England* (1735). In that year he retired to Chanteloup in Touraine, the result being *Letters on the Study of History*. The *Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism* was printed in 1749 with *The Idea of a Patriot King* to deck out the claims of Frederick Prince of Wales. His political ideas were current in print while he lived; his philosophy and religion were posthumously given to the world in 1754 by David Mallet.

Bolingbroke's writings are of interest less for their matter than for their style and their effects on other writers. His historical essays, so ignorant and partisan, sometimes have reality, because they are written by one who made, or tried to make, history himself. His deism, which is without the religious sense, gave some form and impulse not only to Pope but also to Voltaire, and so to the whole century. None of our neglected writers has left a surer print. His style was the first completely to take into English the Ciceronian fulness and harmony; Gibbon and many others would have been different without him. His thought, though not his own, was coined anew by Voltaire and Pope, and ran broadcast amongst the lands that read the *Dictionnaire* and the *Essay on Man*.¹ He is therefore not an amateur, a traceless

¹ For a strong statement of these influences see J. Churton Collins, *Bolingbroke, and Voltaire in England* (1886); and cp. the comments and bibliography, *s.v.* "Saint-John," in *Dict. Nat. Biog.* (1897). The *Works* should be re-edited.

meteor who went the way of Collins or Toland. So far from light and perishable in its effects is form like his, even unattended by original worth of substance. It is the form of a great orator.

The works of Defoe (apart from his avowed fiction), of Steele, and of Addison were shaped in great measure by the changed estate of the literary class, *New conditions:* and the growth of the press. Macaulay, *The fat years* and more amply M. Beljame, have narrated the Great Revolution in the personal lot of authors that began even under William, an unliterary king, and culminated under Anne, and declined again under Walpole. Under Charles II., though both Court and Opposition had found their account in patronising literature and enlisting the theatres, Cowley, Butler, and Otway had all become figures of speech for the neglect of wit. The intervening reign of James was morose to writers; but the discovery of their importance was doubtless due at the first to Halifax and Somers and other Whig lords, and it was soon caught up by the Tories. By the time of Anne nearly all the writers, great or little (save those who, like Defoe or Mandeville, were socially outclassed, or those who, like Shaftesbury or Bolingbroke, were above need), were in some way paid and installed and honourably entreated. From Addison to Tickell, from Arbuthnot and Gay to the young authors whom Swift befriended, all looked to a place for a reward and career: and even Swift, despite the *Tale of a Tub*, was a dean. Pope was disqualified from office by his refusal as a Catholic to take oath, and

earned his independence by letters. The historic scene on the first night of *Cato* (1713) would be enough to show, what can be overwhelmingly proved, how this prosperity implied the strictest alliance of letters with party. Congreve, whose real work was over before 1700, was almost the only leading writer to whom *Cato* could be dedicated with a show of neutrality. The literary life could scarcely be lived at all away from London, from politics, from theological dispute, and hardly any great author is to be found working in solitude. Every writer of the time shows how the city atmosphere told upon literature itself, determining its poetical forms, envenoming its spirit, yet giving it masculinity and finished pugilistic science; how expression became prosaic and prose perfect; and how this balance of forces, denying to letters some of their primary inspiration but perfecting them within a certain scope, hung delicately poised, for about a quarter of a century, and was then, by elements both political and spiritual, disturbed.

In 1695 the formal release of the press from official censorship soon quickened it into a teeming profusion of mere mayfly sheets—*Postboys*, *Newsletters*, and *Courants*, and *Athenian Mercuries*. The *Daily Courant* was the first daily paper, and began on March 11, 1702. An eccentric, John Dunton, had invented a new kind of unpolitical *Mercury*, containing the germ both of the "occasional verse" and the "answers to correspondence." But all these things were doubly unapt to satisfy the great, swelling, centralised body of readers. There was no leading article, and no

magazine article. The first was essentially founded by Defoe and perfected by Swift, the second founded by Steele and perfected by Addison. No later change in the external conditions of literature, unless it be the blow struck at patronage by Johnson, has so deeply affected authorship as this double invention.

Daniel Defoe¹ (1661?-1731) played with unequalled relish the part of the picaresque hero as man of letters. He is the most profuse English
Defoe. author of the time, and passed through many incarnations. His peculiar relations with the truth raise more critical difficulties as to the authorship, date, and accuracy of the works ascribed to him than is the case with any other of our writers. Falsehood is to him "no casual mistress, but a wife" whose value he respects profoundly. The seam between his facts and his fancies is disguised by his deftness in literary tailoring, and by the prosaic solidity of detail with which he approaches both, considering them merely as narrative material. But he had no fancy of the aerial, or spiritual, or poetical, or graceful kinds. This lack prevents him, save very fitfully, from being great, but it also prevents him from deceiving himself. With him, imagination has the circumstantial cast of memory: his invention is without bounds, but it appeals purely to the positive intellect. He cared little for language, and snatched at words, but

¹ Bibliography very difficult: still founded chiefly on W. Lee, *Life of Defoe and Newly Discovered Writings*, 3 vols., 1869. *Works*, 20 vols., Oxford, 1840-41. *Romances and Narratives*, ed. Aitken, 16 vols., 1895. For list see *Dict. Nat. Biog.* Cp. Minto, *Defoe*, in *English Men of Letters*.

possesses pre-eminently the skill that falls short of art. For these reasons—though we do not include in this book the history of eighteenth-century fiction, which opens with Defoe, and though our limits almost confine us to the record that no less than 250 distinct publications stand to his name—it is rather by the label than by the treatment that we can distinguish his fiction from his journalism; for his fiction is alloyed with truth to a degree that cannot be ascertained. In his political writings, however direct, vociferous, and telling, the difficulties as to his real opinions and allegiance thicken as his life advances, and are in some cases still unsolved.

Defoe—originally Foe—was the son of a London Dissenting butcher. In opposition under the Stuarts, he was an active and valued Whig pamphleteer under William, and held a small post till 1699. This was the least equivocal part of his life. The prose *Essay upon Projects*, and the rolling doggerel, mostly hendecasyllabic, called *The True-Born Englishman* (a jeer at the dislike of our mongrel race to a foreign monarch), were the chief of his many services to the Revolution—which included papers on the war, on occasional conformity, and much else. *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702) is rather a piece of acting than of irony. Defoe bellows through the mask of a high Anglican who is rabidly calling (“Crucify the thieves!”) for the “shortest way.” The Tories, at first taken in and pleased, soon felt angry and absurd; the Dissenters, Defoe’s own people, angry and nervous. The author had occasion to produce his *Hymn to the Pillory*, and

leisure in Newgate not only to begin the strange clinical studies of low humanity that he embodied in his stories, but also to found, though in a form that did not outlive him, the political leading article. *The Review of the Affairs of France*, which began in 1704, and came out for many years twice or thrice a-week, was the first and chief of Defoe's ventures, in which, with the instinct of the heaven-born pressman, he shouted, with every resource of abuse, paradox, and statistics, his opinion on every political topic—the war, the condition of trade, the Union, the Church, the succession. The history of his secret dealings with Harley, and of the way in which he wrote till 1710 ostensibly for the Whigs, then faced round under the plea of patriotism, and once more, on the death of the queen, steered not unsuccessfully in the cross-currents,—all this, together with his strange subterranean dealings in later life with Mist's and other journals, was in part unravelled by Mr William Lee, though much still awaits, perhaps idly, full explanation. The enormous mass of writing turned out by Defoe during his career falls broadly into the four classes of periodical journalism, pamphlets, fictitious history, and novels. To these might be added verses and miscellanies of all sorts. The semi-fictitious history, of the type of the *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) and the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720), may rank with the novels: it shows the same gifts. The pamphleteering is a most voluminous accessory to Defoe's regular journalism. In both, the social paper, the general article, the catering for the idle reader, was

a wholly subordinate thing, and Defoe did not do it very well. His hand was too weighty, his voice too stentorian: the work awaited gentlemen. The Scandal Club (embodied in the *Mercurie Scandale*, a kind of social supplement), and similar devices that continued the plan of Dunton, were not Defoe's real business. Mr Minto has discerned, probably with justice, a certain patriotism and honest public purpose under all Defoe's "quick-change" artistry and profound professional cunning. Certainly nothing of the sort in English before Cobbett has ever been written with such life, audacity, shrewdness, and perception of the popular point, as the best of Defoe's articles in the *Review* and elsewhere. It is not literature; it is oratory. Defoe was of the English bourgeois: he understood his class, with its demand for strong stimulants of paradox, for the show of honesty, for a man who will scold and reproach it, better than any one. He had not to get into his pose, as Swift had to do and did when personating the Drapier: he knew exactly what the man in the street and what the man in the shop or in the thieves' crib would find impressive, and nothing could keep him from supplying his customers. The L'Estranges and Needhams are blotted out in retrospect by Defoe's sheer force of irrepressible character, by his voracious intellect, and by the incessant fume, clamour, and sparkle of his journalistic smithy.

It is a common statement that Steele and Addison captured and shamed society, by their wit and skill, into a comparative decency, and that they did this by

sharpening against morosity, zeal, and religious unreason of all sorts, another edge of their *Addison and Steele.* mockery, in the service of plain morals, good sense, and the behaviour of gentlemen. It needs to be added, considering the traditional cult of Addison, that the worth of this national service far exceeded the worth of the writing that rendered it. Neither Steele nor Addison is really a great writer, though one is a fertile inventor of subjects and a truly sympathetic soul, while the other is a finished craftsman within quite a limited scope.

Richard Steele¹ (born 1672, knighted 1715, died 1729) had been a soldier, and the writer of the *Christian Hero* and of the comedies already named, before he wrote what well might be deemed his most lasting work, namely his letters (sent mostly in 1707-1708, and printed in 1787) to Mary Scurlock, his wife. The Irish delicacy of soul that leads to justice of feeling, the Irish play and caprice that end in the most self-forgetful devotion, are here recorded, if without a spark of "Celtic" poetry. The love-letters of a passionate gentleman, with leanings to conviviality, moralising, and debt, they betray through everything, though it may seem a paradox, the stamp of the "age of reason." Steele, whether remonstrating with himself or others, always appeals to some right central code of action, recognisable at once as soon as stated. This idea of some *canon* for gentlemen is, with all Steele's profuse play and whim, the spring of his writings.

¹ G. A. Aitken, *Life*, 2 vols., 1889. *Selections*, by Austin Dobson, Oxford, 1896 (ed. 2).

In 1709 he began *The Tatler*. He was the true inventor of the imaginary society, of the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, of the æsthetic, the moral, and the social paper, and of the union, in a single regular sheet, of a rigid *cadre* with continual freshness of handling. Part of these discoveries he shared with Defoe, but his public were the classes above Defoe's.

Joseph Addison¹ (1672-1719), a churchman, a scholar, and a fellow of Magdalen, Oxford, received a training that called out his affinity to the graces of the Latin spirit. His early lines on *The Greatest English Poets* are indeed ominous, both in form and judgment, of his mature limitations. But he knew and could write Latin poetry, as Macaulay has pointed out, and as his charming *Battle of the Cranes and Pygmies* attests. He had a timid but true sensibility to pathos and worth; he also had an ideal of finish, with which in his prose he never tampered; and some of this endowment he may perhaps have found in his study of Virgil. His hymns have a tinkling popular quality; but his other English verse is naught, including the *Campaign*, angel-simile and all, which got him his first preferment from the Whigs. He helped in *The Tatler*, which only lasted till January 1711. *The Spectator* was begun on March 1 of the same year. Addison, who had a great share of what the French call *suite*, or the power of sticking to a

¹ *Works*, ed. Tickell, 4 vols., 1721; in Bohn's series, 6 vols. Hurd's ed. re-edited, 1856, and ed. Green, 6 vols., 1898. *The Spectator*, reprints by G. Gregory Smith, 8 vols., 1897-98, and by H. Morley: T. Arnold's *Selections from the Spectator*, Oxford, 1881.

thing and developing it, soon governed *The Spectator*, which, as every one knows, organised far more highly the framework and the general plan of *The Tatler*, with certain additions and new devices. The first seven volumes of the paper were ended by the beginning of 1713 (which saw also the theatrical success of *Cato*). The tale is familiar of its vogue, of its surviving, despite the Stamp Act, the numberless early imitators, of Addison's various signatures and habits, of his gradual capture of the control and the applause from the hands of Steele, who had no head for management; of his successive inventions, like the occasional poem (Pope's *Messiah*), and the Saturday serious article or sermon or criticism; and of the surprising changefulness of the daily fare. All this narrative must here give place to a general comment on the later career, united and separate, of the two chief authors. *The Guardian* (1713) was at first written on the same lines as *The Spectator*, and by both partners, but was broken off by Steele's sally into politics. His pamphlets on Dunkirk and the Succession question (*The Crisis*) led to his tilt with Swift and expulsion from the Commons. *The Englishman* was his independent sheet, conducted in the same cause, and minor ventures followed. In 1715 Addison produced, alone, his fifty-five numbers of *The Frecholder*, a very ingenious manifesto, designed, by persuasion sprinkled with wit, to reconcile the solid and propertied classes to the House of Hanover. Two years later its author was made Secretary of State for the southern province, the climax of his prosperous rise in office. Before

his death in 1719 he had contributed to the *Old Whig* papers in animadversion of Steele's *Plebeian*, which was started in honest but, as usual, somewhat maldroit dissidence from the Whigs. Steele, who lived ten years more, produced other pamphlets and periodicals, the chief of which, *The Theatre*, entangled him in a quarrel with Dennis. His *Conscious Lovers* (1722) was his last success, and he died in money embarrassments.

The aim of humanising the audience was imposed artificially by Steele upon comedy, and destroyed its nerve. But the same purpose lent nerve, *Contrast.* and still gives life, to much of his periodical writing, which is generous with experience and emotion. Magnanimity, bravery, chivalry, were not to Steele texts for a superior discourse. His accent in commending them is the same as that in his personal, reminiscent descriptions of gentle and pleasing scenes, family affection, and delicate courtship. Hence his charm even in his didactic essays; and in passages like the death of Esteourt the comedian it is much greater. His art it is possible to underrate; the characters of Callisthenes and Aectus are far beyond the incoherent Theophrastian kind, and quite as good as anything of the sort in Addison. His Eastern tales, critical attempts, and the like, are tentative. His position among men of greater metal is parallel with Goldsmith's; and he, like Goldsmith, by pure virtue of temperament, strikes on things that are hid from the wise and prudent. Not only of debt and bankruptcy did he

speaking feelingly, but of charity and death, and of the duty of praise and the uselessness of retrospect.

Addison, however, is impersonal. His gift consists in the nice accumulative skill, having certain affinities to that of Miss Austen, with which *The Spectator*, or detached note-taking mind, weaves together traits. And the world of manor and coffee-house that he thus re-creates for us, he remembers with a selective and humorous nicety that is called feminine more because it is rare among men (though Cowper has it) than because it is common among women. In the Coverley and Honeycomb papers, and in his gentle skits on the Italian opera, or on female patches, or on little vanities, Addison is the explorer of a new kind of mockery, and its master. As he leant more upon his aim to "enliven morality with wit and temper wit with morality"—that is, as he becomes less disinterested—his service became more purely ephemeral. When he dilutes Locke or Pascal, and plays the thinker, he becomes "provincial." His serious attitude towards women is less sound than Steele's: he is himself too finicking, too like what he thinks them to be. "Let him fair-sex it to the world's end for me," with Swift might cry the modern reader. His style, in the more solemn parts of his programme, is superficially better than the matter, like much of Cicero's. But the ear may not long, at least in prose, be satisfied with what satisfies nothing else. Hence he has no real hold, as a writer, on the later world, though the effect of his instinctive balance and flexibility of speech passed into literature, for at least

as much as it was worth. Addison's critical papers on Milton have been named, and their place in the history of appreciation: it is right to add that his handling of Shakespeare and of the English ballads, however timid, was fresh to his public. Lastly, his dignified and incorruptible character, and his charm of conversation among friends, are attested, and in some measure pass into his writing and give it solidity. He had a humanising taste for good wine; and despite his trait, imputed also to Renan, of "assenting with civil leer" to folly, his character, if a little thin and cold, retains our liking. On such independent evidence as exists, he was better-natured than Pope's lines would allow. His great influence on Germanic classicism will be named below (chap. vii.)

Alexander Pope¹ (born 21st May 1688, died 30th May 1744) was endowed with a gift of expression more than equal to anything that he had to say, *Pope's position.* and with a keen sense for the beauty of words, that was only limited by his defective sense for other beauty. Yet other causes exclude him from the highest order, for his talent, unlike that of Gray, was susceptible and passive, not masculine and independent. Hence, while Gray resisted his age and had no authority over it, Pope won his authority by sub-

¹ *Works*, ed. Warburton, 9 vols., 1751. *Works and Correspondence*, ed. Elwin and Courthope, 10 vols., 1871-1889, including *Life* in vol. v., which embodies discoveries by C. W. Dilke (collected in *Papers of a Critic*, 1875). Among many criticisms may be singled out those of L. Stephen, *Pope*, in *English Men of Letters*, and of Mark Pattison, in eds. of *Essay on Man* and of *Satires and Epistles*, Oxford, 1871, &c.

duing himself. Still Pope's æsthetic sensibility to language and cadence is far beyond that of his time, or that of his admirer Byron, or that of Swift, who lived beside him, and whose birthright is a sense of the adequacy and adjustment of words, not of their beauty. Addison had the idea of style, and health of character, but not the poetical senses. Pope had no health of any kind, save in happy and tender intervals; but such an endowment as his, dependent in part upon his frailties, was worth a little disease.

There are passages in Pope, like his lines on the grave of the *Unfortunate Lady*, or the remote and noble Donne-like conceit¹ in the same work, or the speech of Sarpedon, which show him fitfully attaining perfection under a higher law of beauty than was then familiar. But these are rarities; they are not his final utterance, nor the source of his great authority, which he did not found till he had ceased working in the forms of more poetical periods than his own. He subdued his sense of beauty to realise the controlling concepts, the metrical ideals, the ethical ideals, with all their sterilities and uncharities, that were around him. He did this perfectly, and no disciple went beyond him.

Pope began to issue his *Iliad* in 1715, and his

¹ "Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age
Dull sullen pris'ners in the body's cage:
Dim lights of life that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres:
Like Eastern Kings a lazy state they keep.
And, close confin'd to their own palace, sleep."

Odyssey in 1725. These ten years divide the period when he covets, from that when he attains, *Earlier verse.* complete expression. He began to write very young, though he was hardly so young as he pretends. At first, casting about with the sensitive mimicry that sometimes led him into real feeling, he echoes in smoother tones the conventional pastoral; fabricates, much better than Denham, the "local poem," *Windsor Forest*; handles Statius in the way of Dryden, though the voice be somewhat that of a woman in man's masquerade; seizes, in his imitations, the trick of Cowley and Waller exactly, and that of Chaucer (in the *Temple of Fame*) and of Spenser not at all; and finds his best account in Ovidian pathos. Nothing that Pope did is more Elizabethan, more Drayton-esque, more romantically beautiful, than *Eloisa to Abelard*, and the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* (published 1717); the artistic sincerity of the latter piece is not staked on its truthfulness to fact, which is very uncertain. In all this Pope is but nervously shaping bygone sentiment to the new couplet and its accumulated rhetoric. But the *Essay on Criticism* (1711) sums up with the utmost formal finish, which is a disguise for mental incoherence, the critical ideas or platitudes floating about since 1660. It re-phrases the conceptions, which we have already noted in Boileau, of universal nature as revealed by the antique, and of false style as corrected by the same standard. But what Pope leaves out of mention is his own procedure in the face of antiquity, his passion for bringing it under alien forms. His real

standard of comparison, now and always, is not the Greeks and Romans, but his own age, his own talent. All this gives unreality to the felicities of the *Essay*, while its critical history, proceeding from Aristotle to Walsh, indicates the youth of the writer, which the rest would tempt us to forget. *The Rape of the Lock* was no doubt suggested by the favour shown to *Le Lutrin*, and even by Garth's *Dispensary* (1699), a heavy medical satire flavoured with a little wit; but it is different in kind from these works, and the parallel that tells us most about Pope is Spenser's *Maiopotmos*, which differs from *The Rape of the Lock* because its delicacy is free from wittiness, and its frail fancy seems the last light exertion of poetical strength. But Pope's piece marks the upper and not the lower limit of his imaginative effort. It has often been praised for the deftness with which (contrary to the well-known counsel of Addison) its Rosicrucian sylphs were in the second draft (1714) inwrought with the mock-epic of the first (1712). Some of Pope's jeers intrude a little on the airiness, and suggest his correspondence with Lady Mary; for he seldom writes about women like a man. But the poem is cut lightly in silver to a decorative pattern that is his and no one else's.

How much of Homer departs when Homer is put into a consonantal language, written in the discontinuous couplet; how he loses his simplicity, which
The Homer. is the flower of an elaborate breeding, like the manners of kings; how his noble passion, ever fed by direct union with man and the visible, ele-

mentary world, is sophisticated; how he is beggared of the great epic style, by having to pass, as we have said, under the yoke of the Augustan reforms; how Pope, to reproduce Homer, uses a false style that is almost new to his own audience, and is capable of saying

“Let his last spirit smoke upon my dart”; .

or,

“The ruthless falchion op’d his tender side,”

—all this was first exposed, not by the eighteenth-century combatants, who after all were too close to judge Pope, but in the campaign of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Yet Pope cared better for Homer than his practice shows. What a smooth and noble poem he substituted, despite his poverty in Greek, and his lack of the physical basis necessary for feeling Homer duly, has never been quite ignored. Pope’s style was educated by his *Homer*, where it is transitional, full of inexpressive matter, and not in the least like that of the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* or the Third of the *Moral Essays*. This transitional style, owing to the supremacy of the *Homer*, was the chief source of Pope’s false authority. It was this, and not the direct and perfect diction of his satire, that the romantics set themselves to abolish. The *Homer* has one epic quality, sonority and vowelled ease; in this respect it can be read and declaimed with something of the same pleasure as the original. The *Iliad* was done single-handed, and the *Odyssey* with Brome and Fenton for humble and maltreated partners. By the whole work Pope got money,

fame, freedom, and at last emancipation from the manner in which he wrote it.

For a note of self-derision is heard in the heroics of *The Dunciad*, which was the great detonation of the Scriblerian set against literary folly. *Theobald and The Dunciad.* The work was partly incited by a display of Pope's own ignorance. His edition of Shakespeare came out in 1725. It is not without nice verbal divinations, and the preface is his finest piece of prose. But it is made on lordly principles; Shakespeare is cut or trimmed whenever Pope is offended; and Pope said untruly that he had been through the original editions. Lewis Theobald, doubtless the greatest revealer and corrector ever known of the Shakespearian text, whose labours were maligned and yet enjoyed by many commentators, exposed Pope in his *Shakespeare Restor'd* (1726), and added textual improvements which Pope put into his next issue.¹ Theobald's full edition of Shakespeare did not come till 1734. Meantime he had been grotesquely appointed the first hero of *The Dunciad*. The first edition of this poem was dated 1728, the first authorised edition 1729; and the altered version, which replaced Theobald by Colley Cibber, did not come till 1742. The work was ushered in, and attended in all re-issues, with Pope's mystifying apparatus. Much of the dust that it raised has settled deep upon *The Dunciad*, though Pope put more energy into it than into any other work. Many

¹ The editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare, and especially J. Churton Collins (*Essays and Studies*, 1896, *The Parson of Shakespearian Criticism*), have well redressed the wrongs of Theobald.

passages, the invocation to Swift, the sleepy reading-match, the peroration, go all the lengths that are possible to this kind of writing. But the work is also more seriously flawed than any other that he wrote, and in criticising it we had best be silent about his "art." Cibber was a yet worse figurehead of Dulness than Theobald, and the change left some inconsistencies. Pope, too, writes with a despicable pretence of impersonal rage against the little writers. Worst of all, the tone that is affected is not his own: he is really angry and writhing; he is totally unable to "laugh and shake" like Dryden, or generalise his hate of folly like Swift. The true merit of the poem, as shown in the preface by Martinus Scriblerus, lies in its mock adjustment to the contemporary canons of epic, and in the keeping of its sham magnificence.

The *Essay on Man* (1732-34), the main theses of which have been detected in notes of Bolingbroke, is more than the chief literary coinage of an *latter verse*, incoherent deism, with the fissures in the thought half-plastered over. Amongst all English abstract poems it remains supreme for its changefulness, its concentration, and the fulness of its rhetorical energy. The list of translations into most literary tongues, and of the replications and imitations that it provoked, bespeaks something universal in its appeal to its time. Like Wordsworth's *Prelude*, it was meant only as one section of a great speculative poem; on knowledge, government, and morality—nothing less. The *Moral Essays*, on Riches, Taste, and other things,

are a scrap of this unfulfilled project, and they unite the *Essay on Man* with the *Imitations of Horace*, Pope's last and most consummate works, where his expression reaches its goal. Even here he leans on a model, and prevails by following the supple, waving lines of the *pedestris sermo*, which he uses to give his matured opinions on life, letters, his friends, his enemies, and himself. The *Imitations* are more sincere than his correspondence, which is, like most of his publications, surrounded with dishonesties, and is doctored for print. But who shall say where pose begins with Pope? It is a *première coutume*; sometimes it is brutal mauliness, as in the picture of Narcissa (Second *Moral Essay*), sometimes it is the defence of virtue, sometimes it is the sanctifying of ridicule to the use of truth (*Epilogue*); without pose his art is lost. It is different from the dramatic assumptions of Swift, for Pope deceives himself. But the literary history and personal irony in the *Epistle to Augustus* are on the whole just. The earlier *Epistles*, especially the second to Miss Blount, show a more ruthless side of his humour than the famous glaring pictures of Atossa and Atticus.

Two opposing instincts encourage Pope to write. One is that of dialectic, or the exposition of abstract *Pope's mental* matter; and this he conducts with noted *make and his art.* skill, because of his great receptiveness. The same quality prevents him from really making his own the ideas that he seizes, so that the pleasure that we take in his poetical handling of ideas is at last of a low kind. In the second place, the demon

of *naturalism* is already upon him; his mind is positive, detailed, and documentary; he can catch a scene, or the flying humours of conversation, and fix them in durable verse that seems to be effortless. There is the stuff of the novelist and observer in the lines on Villiers' death-bed, or in those on the dame with her cold coffee stranded in the country house: these are brilliant examples of the same power that produced the verse of Swift and the descriptions in *Moll Flanders*.

But the finish that Pope spends on detail, whether concrete or other, is less to his glory than his planning instinct, which extends alike to design, proportion, particulars, and graces. Herein he is our prince of classicism; compare even *The Dunciad* with the endless, dragging *Hudibras*! He only clothes, it is true, unpoetical thought, and that in the secondary forms of burlesque, satire, and epistle; in epic or tragedy his thoughts would show small and shrunken. But then he was an artist, and knew what forms it was for him to perfect. His own form, therefore, approaches the antique in so far as it escapes the indefinite. Because, unhappily, the infinite escapes him equally, he remains incomplete.

Pope's respect for controlling design was also checked by his mental constitution, which compelled him to "think in flashes" and without real sequence. The same limitation encourages his tendency to points; and for his points he found, ready to be improved further, the natural metrical unit, the couplet. Pope's letter to Cromwell of 25th November 1710 partially

states his reforms in this heroic metre, in which he built not only *Homer* but his fourteen thousand and odd original verses. The chief of these *Pope as a metrist.* are: the deft use of hiatus; the disuse of "do" and "did" and other amateur expletives, and of monosyllabic lines "unless very artfully managed"; the varying of rhyme; the sparing of Alexandrines, and the shifting of the break, normally between the fourth and sixth places. Triplets he made less and less use of. But this programme does not explain the true basis of his metrical change, which is the isolation of the individual couplets in sense, grammar, and sound. Therein he goes back upon the later freedoms of Dryden. The proportion of lines and couplets that are "closed" at the end is much increased in his later works;¹ the couplets come to be strung rather than chained, and the total unity is produced, without "overflow" or "enjambement," and by the whole metrical paragraph in its preconceived harmony. Within this law Pope works; he subtilises the incidence of stress to an unknown degree, doubling, dropping, or inverting for every imaginable effect of balance, accumulation, and climax. His alliteration is free and always cunning. For rhymed talk, portraiture of character, burlesque, invective, and pathetic tirade, he found, within the limits he chose, the infallible modulation. After the *Homer* his verse is never tired, never merely snipsnap or jiggling, it never reverts to the older ruggedness. It reacted on his temper and rhetoric, which became associated with it and with it ruled,

¹ See W. E. Mead, *The Versification of Pope*, Leipzig, 1889.

as the next volume must tell, a whole generation of poetry.

John Gay¹ (1685-1732) counts among the wits (with and upon whom, waiting idly for a sinecure, he chiefly lived) by virtue of little except
Gay. *Mr Pope's Welcome from Greece*, written on the completion of the *Iliad*. Its *ottava rima* is of a dexterous dash and felicity; the tone has a sort of friendly impudence, and Gay shows himself for once a poet, if only by his musical management of the swarm of names, "Lepell, Bellenden, Rochester," and so many others. He also wrote the best octosyllabic epigram of the time that is to be found out of Swift, on "England's Arch-Poet," Sir Richard Blackmore,² whose practice of composing epics was only stayed in 1729, and of whom this mention must serve. Gay's *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716), written in half-mock heroics, is a record of minute smells and splashes, and a highly curious document of the surface of London. It shows that hunger for the bare, minute facts of life and manners, which was only to be satisfied in prose fiction. All the rest of Gay is inferior, though his

¹ Ed. J. Underhill ("Muses Library"), 1893. *Fables*, ed. A. Dobson, 1882.

² "See who ne'er was or will be half-read;
 Who first sang Arthur, then sang Alfred.

 Then hiss'd from earth, grew heavenly quite;
 Made every reader curse the light,
 Undid creation at a jerk,
 And of redemption made damn'd work."

Fables (first vol., 1727 ; second vol., where "the morals of most of them are of the political kind," posthumously published) shared with Pope's *Homer* and with *Gulliver* the popular vote, and have been reprinted and translated very often indeed. Gay took unfamiliar pains to invent subjects, and to make his treatment obvious and glossy ; his "morals" are sometimes saved from triteness by a trace of personal disappointment. The famous *Beggar's Opera* (1728), Gay's great external success, with its tinkling songs, its topical satire (continued in the prohibited *Polly*, 1728) on Walpole, and the facility of its sentimental interest in the operatic blackguard, is one of the works that may be said to hold a recognised position outside literature. Gay's comedy, probably touched by Pope, *The What d'ye Call It* (1715), though forgotten, is a far brighter composition. He also made sham pastorals, casual verse, and essays. He had much selfish good-nature and some indolent wit. *The Present State of Wit*, his pamphlet on the journalism of the year 1711, shows that he would have written the current kinds of social prose at least as aptly as verse.

Far more wit—though not enough to save him from too often writing seriously—was the portion of

Prior. Matthew Prior¹ (1664-1721), a considerable

master of light smirking lyrical gallantries of *contes*, and of pungent personal epigrams, often monkey-like and dirty in comment, but usually clear-cut and conclusive in form. Prior, after being picked up by Lord Dorset and sent to Cambridge, absorbed

¹ *Works*, new "Aldine" ed., R. B. Johnson, 2 vols., 1892.

there a modest stint of classics and philosophy. With these, while in prison long after, he made play in his *Alma*, a long rambling copy of pointed Hudibrastics ostensibly concerning the conflicting theories of the soul. He began, however, in prose, as the partner of Charles Montague, later Earl of Halifax. Their skit (1687) on Dryden, or *The Hind and Panther transversed to the Story of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse*, is a bit of late Restoration comedy or burlesque, admirably and provokingly turned. Prior entered diplomacy, served successive parties, and then was sent with several embassies to Paris; spent two years, from 1715 to 1717, in prison for helping secretly to negotiate peace for the Tories; but took occasion of the increased market value of verse and his own fame to make an excellent competence by issuing a folio of his poems in 1718. The worst thing that has to be forgiven Prior is his transaction with the ballad of the *Nut-Brown Maid*, which he turns into *Henry and Emma*, written in heroics. Beside this performance his unreadable victory odes and his *Solomon* are venial. Prior wrote *contes* in English, a kind of light inferior transfusion of La Fontaine's. His *Epitaph* (on Jack and Joan) has the soft urbanity and fidelity of Addison's prose at its best. *The Female Phaeton* and the lines *To a Child of Quality* are among the first of our "society" poems that merit extreme praise for their finish, and Prior did many as good. The parody on Boileau's *Namur Ode* is well-deserved and well-managed. Prior is our best lapidary of light verse before Goldsmith.

The kinds of verse that we call classical, that were mastered by Pope, Swift, and Prior, owed something, as has been seen, to sundry Latin and French moulds which were current. The critical and logical purpose is more clearly present in poetry than at any other age of English letters. There is a general passion for definition and symmetry, and for a certain kind of perfection. But, as to their matter, it is no paradox to say that these poets, and the prose-writers as well, can be called classical because they are original, because they are deeply rooted in the life and temper of their time, because they lose by turning away from the great poetical or spiritual inspirations; they turn away from Shakespeare and from Milton, as much as from the Greeks. In Thomson and Young (*Winter*, 1726) the power of Milton was to be renewed. It had never been quite extinguished. The technique of his blank line had been kept alive by the mimicry, which turned into discipleship, of John Philips. After his excellent brief parody, *The Splendid Shilling* (1701), came his neo-Georgic, *Cyder*, infected with the pedantic as well as the serious rhythms of Milton. This was to become a stubborn eighteenth-century form; but the earlier poetry of Milton, and even that of Marvell, imitations of which were also to pester the mid-century, worked unto salvation in the only two poets who have yet to be mentioned. In Thomas Parnell¹ (1679-1718) the propensity to Miltonise was aided by no mean taste and equipment in classical, and that not merely Latin,

¹ *Works*, ed. Pope, 1721; ed. Aitken ("Aldine"), 1894.

scholarship. Parnell, who got his learning at Dublin, came to London in 1706, was in 1710 driven into society and repute by Swift, was accepted among the Tories and admitted in the Scriblerus set, lost his hope of preferment in the *débacle* of 1714, and died a country vicar four years after. Pope chose and published his *Nature* verse remains, with a bad elegy, which is *reappearing*, addressed to Harley and too much about Harley. Parnell translated both the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* and the *Pervigilium Veneris* very much in the mode of the time, but not without feeling and neatness; and wrote a life of Zoilus, and a preface to Pope's *Iliad*. His anacreontics and the like are neat also; his admired *Hermit*, easy and smooth, and in manner not very unlike pieces of Leigh Hunt, is a story none the less absurd for being ancient. It is his *Night-Piece on Death* and his *Hymn to Contentment* that distinguish Parnell: the first has a flavour of the sequestered, spiritual, and almost mystical tone that else barely survived; the second, though not without an Addisonian cheapness of hymnody, is genuine and devout, and betrays a reserved spring of meditative sweetness. He is poetically less interesting than Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea, whose *Miscellany Poems* were published in 1713. The town may have preferred her Odes on *The Hurricane* and *The Spleen*; but *Peace*, *The Nightingale*, and *The Tree* have some of the mystical engrossment with which Marvell and Vaughan brooded on the life, literal and figurative, of natural things. The poetry of a tree, its service rendered of shelter and shadow, its hon-

ourable fate, when its stock is spent, of falling by the winds that prevent the woodman's axe,—to hear of these things, amidst the full swing of the urban literature, is to sit refreshed, with a presentiment of change, outside the clamour and vapour and opulence of Rome.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DECAY OF LATIN: GERMANIA.

THE PERSISTENCE OF LATIN—ITS DECADENCE—GALLICISM IN THE LITERATURES—GERMANY: THE ARREARS OF THOUGHT—THOUGHT: PUFENDORF AND THOMASIUS—THE VERDICT ON CLASSICISM—LEIBNIZ: CAREER—DRIFT OF HIS SYSTEM—THE MONADS: GENERAL SCOPE OF LEIBNIZ—THE ARREARS OF LITERATURE—ROMANCE—‘SIMPLICISSIMUS’—WEISE—RELIGION AND PIETISM—GERHARDT AND OTHERS—GALLICISM AND ANGLICISM: HALLER—THE ‘SPECTATORS’ AND CRITICISM—THE ONE SECULAR POET: GÜNTHER.

THE FAR NORTH: ARREARS—FEDERAL LEARNING AND SCIENCE—THE NORTHERN PAST—THEOLOGY AND HYMNODY: PJETURSSON, KINGO, AND FRESE—SWEDEN: CHRISTINA AND STJERNHJELM—THE EPIGONI AND TRIEWALD—OLOF VON DALIN—DANSK-NORSK: VERSE—‘JAMMERSMINDE’—HOLBERG: CAREER—‘PEDER PAARS’—OTHER WORKS—COMEDIES.

HOLLAND: ANTONIDES—FRENCH CLASSICISM STERILE—LUVKEN AND POOT—TWO COMEDIANS—VAN EFFEEN, THE ‘SPECTATOR,’ AND PROSE.

LATIN, the mediæval mother-tongue of science and scholarship, of ritual and Scripture, and of philosophic thought,—long so nearly conterminous with theology,—had begun to lose its hold of these monopolies in the sixteenth century, and by the end of the seventeenth had receded far. But meanwhile many of the master-works had been written in

*The persistence
of Latin.*

Latin. By Calvin and Bodin, by Bacon and Grotius and Spinoza, it had been used as the sole or the worthier option: Descartes and Hobbes had kept it as a second weapon. The followers of Grotius in the field of natural jurisprudence, Cumberland, Pufendorf, and Thomasius, found in it the fittest and most universal language for their subject, although the last of the three was the great champion, together with Leibniz, of the native German. Leibniz himself, a trilingual writer, shows that though Latin was giving ground in his day, it still commanded a great public; and it was favoured by Newton and other men of science, from Ray in England to Nicolaus Stenonis in the farther north. Huet's *Censura* of Descartes came out as late as 1689, and endless names from the field of philology and disputation would have to be added to close the account. Much of this writing is dreary and unalluring in form; but the imperial tongue made a superb exit with these eminent writers, and was all the more alive in their hands because it was not classically perfect. Milton delivered in Latin verse his dearest regret, and declaimed in Latin prose to a Continental audience. And the language persisted all this while on the strength not only of its history and its native power, but of its great ideal. For while art is intimate, and can only be realised in a vernacular, the ideal of thought can be nothing but federal and cosmopolitan. Latin fulfilled this ideal best, and was an international mint for the things of the mind. The extremity of such a conception is suggested in the lifelong dream of Leibniz, that he might form an

“alphabet of notions,” or a strict and universal language of symbols, by stretching the analogy of mathematics.

But Latin was bound to go. Wide as it struck, it could not spread downwards; it was only for the mandarins. On this count it had been
Its decadence. brought up for judgment at the Reformation, and condemned because it was not a lay language. The Scripture must be open. This is one of the many ways in which the Protestant gave the note to the rational spirit, and it must be set over against the disservice that Protestantism came to render later in delaying free thought and culture over large portions of Europe. The same principle came to be applied, though not very consciously, to the whole sphere of thought and knowledge, and the literary developments of French, English, and German ended by breaking down the caste of Latin. In the first instance French was its natural successor. French served not only as the tongue of diplomacy and society, but as the means of a cosmopolitan understanding in matters of thought and culture. The history of this change would fill a volume, but some few of its signs and causes may be set down in brief.

1. The weight of courtly patronage told for the extension of French. The Gallic training of Charles II., of Queen Christina, and of Peter the Great, was of great influence in the most diverse ways. But the programme of the French king himself doubtless counted for more than all these things put together.

The correspondence of Chapelain,¹ who acted as the agent of Colbert in dispersing the bounty of Louis, affords a lively picture of the ways of encouraging intellect. Distinction and bounty are shed upon Dutch and Italian savants, and the king is assumed throughout as the natural and disinterested spring of recognition. Huygens and Leibniz made Paris their centre, and the Academy of Sciences, both towards and after the end of the reign, prided itself on its international stamp. The *Eloges* of Fontenelle include his praises not only of Vauban and Malebranche, but of Leibniz, and Cassini, and Boerhaave. The sum of all these forces was considerable.

2. The frontier countries, Holland and Switzerland, were increasingly overrun by French. Classicism did little for native Dutch literature except hasten its decline. But Holland, as already shown (p. 56 *supra*), was a country of refuge for Protestant oratory and for free speculation, for Saurin and Bayle, and in this respect its history merges in that of the neighbouring lands. After the expulsion of the Protestants from France in 1685, a strong literary impulse was given to French Switzerland as well as to Holland. Classicism planted its pickets at Geneva, Neuchâtel, and elsewhere. The products have been fully described by the native historians,² who claim no exalted rank,

¹ Ed. Tamizey de Larroque, 2 vols., 1835, in *Collection de Documents inédits sur l'Histoire de la France* (see p. 138 *supra*).

² P. Godet, *Histoire littéraire de la Suisse française*, 1890. V. Rossel, *Hist. litt. de la Suisse romande*, 2 vols., Geneva, &c., 1889. Cp. also Sayous, *op. cit.* (p. 59 *supra*, note).

either in form or matter, for the bulk of them. But there are some figures that make the chronicler linger. Such is Jean-Alphonse Turretini (1671-1737), the enemy of rigid Calvinism, the friend of Leibniz and Fontenelle, the visitor, not only of Bossuet but of Ninon and Saint-Evremond. Such, too, is Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, whose widely-read *Six Voyages* in Turkey, Persia, and the Indies (1676-79) were worked up for print for him by various hands. Such, too, is one of the keenest spirits of the time, and the soundest judge of the two great nations of classicism, the Bernese Béat-Louis de Muralt¹ (1665-1749), whose *Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français*, though written about 1694, were circulated privately, and not published till 1725. Muralt unites a morality of a curiously inward and transcendental stamp with the observant accuracy of a man of this world. He has traits of mordant discrimination that are worthy of La Bruyère. No one caught so well the mixture of stubborn original character and imitative culture that denoted the England of that day. "C'est à Molière surtout qu'ils aiment à se préférer, et c'est lui qu'ils maltraitent." England is full of extraordinary characters, "de héros en mal comme en bien." The whole picture of manners and types in both countries makes Muralt one of the most arresting writers of the time in his own kind.

3. In England the sway of French is shown in a peculiar way. A very large public, which did not care to learn the language, insisted on knowing what

¹ Ed. Greyerz, Bern, 1897.

was written in it. Hence there arose an enormous literature of translations. The bibliography of the works put from French into English towards the end of the century has hardly been realised. It is greatest in theology, political theory, and history. Almost every French work of note, and a hundred others of no note at all, found readers when presented in an English dress. There are a good many translations, but probably far fewer, from English into French. The flood of all these versions is at the highest when the French classical period is drawing to an end, and the interest of society and style begins to be replaced in part by the interest of speculation. The result is that by 1715 France, England, and the countries of refuge, as well as parts of Germany, may fairly be regarded as one intellectual community, with a common currency and free trade in ideas. The other countries, like Italy and Scandinavia, feel the stir and shock in various measure. With Leibniz, who wrote in three languages; with Locke, so soon to be read in French, and Bayle, so soon in English; with Balthasar Bekker, the Cartesian, whose *Enchanted World*, an enlightened plea against the reality of witchcraft, was promptly circulated in Latin, French, and German, as well as the original Dutch,—we stand visibly at the founding of something like cosmopolitan speculation. And to this play of ideas the breakdown of the barriers of language, and of the Latin aristocracy, greatly contributed.

As to pure literature, the effects of classicism on various of the countries will be briefly noted below.

The following summary may be of service in advance.

Gallicism in the literatures. French classicism assisted variously in the decline of those literatures—the Dutch, the Italian, and the Peninsular—that were already declining. It did not contribute much that was good, though it had its day of power, among the literatures that were about to be born in Germany and Scandinavia. In Scandinavia the clearing and forming influence, as will appear, was English; it was the English writing of the age of Anne. And that free interaction, artistically speaking, of France and England, which has so often been illustrated above, may now be broadly summed up. Each nation was too strong to be seriously injured or absorbed by the other. French classicism partly coincided with English, and partly helped it forward. On Dryden and on Pope it was a fertilising power, and for good. The Roscomons and Dennises would have done as little without as they did with it. By the enhancement of form, definition, finish, and the other characteristic virtues, classicism did us immortal service. For these are the qualities which the English have not got naturally, but which they have always shown themselves ready to learn. Conversely, allowing full weight to Descartes and to Bayle, it is certain that England was a great seeding-ground of ideas for France, and so for Europe, during the eighteenth century. The sequence of our thinkers, many of whom are also great writers, from Hobbes to Hume, is enough to establish this primacy. It belongs to the next volume to show how typical a symptom is the exchange of countries be-

tween Bolingbroke and Voltaire, and how much of the programme of the French liberation strikes back to English sources. For the remainder of these pages, it is necessary to go back, and give, though but in outline, the history of the change of thought, and the change of form, in some of the other countries.

Germany.

German thought,¹ though belated, came sooner to its own than German literature. In the middle of the
Germany: seventeenth century, after the end of the
the arrears great and desolating war, Germany found
of thought. herself destitute of any artistic past, since the forgotten middle ages. She was also under the domination of the Protestant Churches and their feuds. The beginnings of the change hardly appear till the third quarter of the century. Most of the philosophic writing was at first Latin, academic, and not original, though the backwash of the great controversies

¹ Histories of German Literature ; by Wilhelm Scherer, Berlin, 7th ed., 1894, and Eng. tr. by Mrs Conybeare, Oxford, 2nd. ed., 1891 (bibliography at end) ; by J. Sime, art. in *Encycl. Britannica* ; by Franz Hirsch, Leipzig and Berlin, n.d. (vol. ii.) ; by Julius Schmidt, Berlin, 1886 (vol. i.) ; and by H. Kurz, 7th ed., Leipzig, 1876, vol. ii. (with notes of many minor writers, and extracts). Cp. the companion vols. of extracts to Scherer, *The German Classics*, ed. Max Müller and F. Lichtenstein (2 vols., Oxford, 1886). H. Hettner, vol. i. (on Germany) in his *Literaturgeschichte des xviii. Jahrh.*, 2nd ed., Brunswick, 1872, has the most philosophic summary. K. Breul, *Bibliographical Guide to German Lit.*, 1895, is of use. The articles in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* are critical as well as narrative, and often of high authority. Karl Goedeke, *Grundriss zur Gesch. der deutschen Dichtung*, ed. 2, vol. iii., Dresden, 1887, is the standard index.

was felt distinctly enough. Cartesianism was at first resisted and officially banned, then installed, then petrified, becoming in its turn a bulwark of resistance. Germany took its share in the assaults on Spinoza, and to a less degree in defending him. But she gave little hint of her destinies before the labours of Pufendorf in the field of natural jurisprudence, of Thomasius in the vindication of the language, and of Leibniz in every province of thought.

The first German chair of natural and international law was founded at Heidelberg, and was held by Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94), whose *Elementa Juris universalis* (1660) was amplified in his chief work *De Jure Naturæ et Gentium* (1672). No branch of philosophy was more vital and concrete in the seventeenth century, none struck more immediately into political science, ethics, theology, and into general jurisprudence. The central conception, deep, confused, and persistent, of a *law of nature*, is the nerve of a line of thinkers from Grotius onwards. On one side it is a moral code or order, no other than that realised in the "City of God" that crowned the vision of Leibniz. On another it is the actual basis of positive law, and its standard. On another it is the rule, by some asserted, and by others, like Hobbes, contradicted, of a primitive social state. On yet another it is the code that is given by God to the natural lights of man. Pufendorf worked out the conceptions of his master Grotius, but enfranchised the idea of natural law more distinctly from theology, interwove many modifications called out by the reading

Thought :

*Pufendorf and
Thomasius.*

of Hobbes, and strongly affirmed the social instinct as part of the content of the law itself. He was in other ways a prophet of German culture. In his Latin letter, *De Statu Imperii Germanici* (1667), "by Severin Monzambano of Verona," he foreshadowed the scheme of a federal German realm, on a highly liberal and secular basis, and not dependent upon Austria. Also, as historiographer of Charles X. and the Elector Friedrich Wilhelm III., he wrote some of the first genuine histories (though still in Latin) that his country had known. His voice, like that of Leibniz, is that of reasoned inquiry and sifted testimony; and both these great men read history in the light of national and international law.

Christian Thomasius¹ (1655-1728), professor, founder of Halle University, the first journalist in Germany; the greatest exorcist of pedantry, of the caste of Latin, and of intolerance; left no monumental book like Pufendorf, and no great philosophical edifice like Leibniz. But he cleared law and ethics still further of dogma, and found their source and warrant in rational experience. His addresses and treatises set the German spirit irrevocably free. In 1687 he gave a lecture in German at Leipzig, on the question, "How the French should be imitated in ordinary life and dealings." This may be called the first discriminating judgment passed upon classicism and on the life out of

¹ R. Prutz, *Gesch. des deutschen Journalismus*, Hanover, 1845, pt. i., has a full account. J. O. Opel in *Historische Commission der Provinz Sachsen*, Halle, 1894, has an excellent study of Thomasius and a reprint of his lecture on the French.

which it grew. The French "are to this day the cleverest (geschickteste) of people, and know how to make each thing duly alive" ("wissen allen Sachen ein recht Leben zu geben"). They have much to tell on the manner of living "a rational, wise, and gentle life."

The verdict on classicism. Thomasius is deeply rational himself, values the Port-Royal Logic, and praises French method and clearness. But all the leading notions, "honnête homme, bon goût, homme galant," are sifted and defined from the standpoint of good sense itself. The aping of Gallic modes by Germans is derided. The aim is to raise the German people by shaping the German tongue to independent use at once for abstract thought and humane intercourse. Bouhours might say that "bel esprit" does not assort well with "les tempéraments grossiers et les corps massifs" of the Northerners, but this remained to be seen. Soon after, Thomasius brought out a kind of review, usually known as the *Teutsche Monate*, full of drastic wit, dialogue, fable, and narrative, all for the same purpose. His German is called rough and formless, but he has directness, and sincerity, and power. His *Smaller German Works* (1701) are numerous. Latterly he led the war against witchcraft, and his name must be heard in every history of the European liberation.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz,¹ the first great philoso-

¹ Many editions, none fully complete. See histories of philosophy for details; the literature is very unwieldy. *Werke*, ed. Kloppe, 11 vols., Hanover, 1861, &c.; ed. Gerhardt, 19 vols. up to 1890, Berlin. There are older eds. by Erdmann (1840) and others. Cp. Merz, *Leibniz*, in "English Philosophical Classics"; Latta, *The Monadology of Leibniz*, Oxford, 1898 (translation, edition, and exposition); Kuno

pher of Germany, was born on 1st July 1646, at

Leibniz: career. Leipzig, where his father was professor of

Moral Philosophy. He went to his native university, and was very early busied with the central problem of thought, seriously doubting "whether to retain substantial forms," like the schoolmen, or to be content, like the Cartesians, with a mechanical account of the nature of substance. "At last mechanism gained the day, and led me to apply myself to the mathematics"; and these he read, though imperfectly, at Jena. After graduating as doctor of law at Altdorf, he remained true to philosophy, and began to see his line of escape both from Descartes and the schools. He was led to ask what were the presuppositions of physics, and the final ground of the natural mechanism. "I was amazed (*tout surpris*) to find that these could not be found in mathematics, and that back to metaphysics I must go." Nearly half a century, filled with multifarious activities, was to pass before Leibniz could work out his great synthesis, in which the utmost stores of knowledge were to serve a spiritual and ideal conclusion.

In 1667 he went to Mainz, and stayed for five years under the Elector-Archbishop and his minister Boineburg. He poured forth Latin tractates in favour of their policy, which was partly dynastic, but partly directed to keeping the stability of Germany, the peace of Europe, and the balance between France,

Fischer's vol. (ii.) on Leibniz, in *Gesch. der neuern Philosophie*, Heidelberg (1867), a brilliant study; and Guhrauer's life, Breslau, 1842, &c.

Austria, and the East. His *Consilium Egyptianum* (1672), designed to divert the onset of the French king into a crusade against the Turks, is remembered for having long afterwards struck the fancy of Napoleon. The counsel was not entertained by Louis; but Leibniz was called to Paris to explain, and a diplomatic failure restored him to philosophy. Meantime he had written a disquisition on an obsolete humanist, *De Stilo philosophico Nizolii*, which proclaimed the pre-established harmony of the German tongue with philosophical writing. The languages, he says, that are the progeny of Latin, can too easily fit themselves, with a little adjustment, to the barbarous terms of the schools. German, as the language of thought, is backward, because it is radically different and cannot do so; but its future will only be the greater, when it comes into its rights. This striking prophecy was hardly fulfilled in Leibniz's own day or in his own work. His German was perhaps the most masterly for its end that had yet been written. But just because he was a true German, giving a presentiment of the universal and cosmopolitan mind of his people, he was forced chiefly to make use of French or Latin, that his audience might have no limits.

His four years' visit to France (1672-76) was broken by excursions to London, where he met Boyle and other men of science. But it was in Paris that he began to find his greater powers. He learned the use of French, and "only entered into the deepest parts of mathematics after converse with M. Huygens." In 1676 he discovered, later than Newton, but by a

partly independent path, and in the form in which it has since been worked, the infinitesimal calculus. He claimed priority as well as independence in the discovery; the first of these claims was rightly dismissed, and the second wrongly reflected on, by the Royal Society. In the long, famous, and painful dispute Leibniz' temper was at fault; the measure of his debt is even now uncertain.¹

Boineburg having died, Leibniz made Hanover his nominal headquarters for the future, and held the position of librarian and councillor to the Dukes of Brunswick. Under the Catholic Johann Friedrich he wrote more political pamphlets; later (1684) assailing Louis in *Mors Christianissimus*, a savage mock plea for the rights of absolute royalty. But his activities became most widely dissipated. He began and partly accomplished the *Annales* of the house of Brunswick; sped to Italy for genealogies; and gathered and printed masses of documents on the law of nations and mediæval history, being thus one of the founders of historical study in Germany. He also wrote profusely in favour of great schemes for the harmony of the churches, especially under the Lutheran Duke, Ernst August. Leibniz, after contriving an eclectic doctrine, made vain overtures to Rome; but Rome

¹ The authorities differ. The art. *Infinitesimal Calculus* in *Encycl. Brit.* (1881), by B. Williamson, favours the claims of Leibniz to independence; that on Newton in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.* (1894), by R. T. Glazebrook, argues that Leibniz owed much to Newton. See too Ball, *Short Account of the History of Mathematics*, 1888, pp. 328-333, where it is suggested that Leibniz misremembered the extent of his own debt. The dispute did not fairly begin till 1699.

was only willing, as usual, to accept a convert: "quisquis est," they said, "noster non est." His plan for a general Church, that should save the unity of Germany by allowing a kind of local option between the old and the new faiths, shattered on Bossuet, whose royal master had no more liking than himself for *circonvence* or for an exchange of tolerance. The correspondence (1692-94) between Bossuet and Leibniz brings out one of the sharpest oppositions in the thought of the time. Leibniz also wasted much noble pains on the plan of a civil league—though he did not hope for dogmatic concord—between the various Protestant bodies. His practical aims were thus baffled, but his ideas far transcended the petty and ambitious interests for which he was sometimes forced to take up his pen. He was better able to realise his schemes for organising knowledge. His friend, the companion of his intellect, the Princess Sophie Charlotte, daughter of Duke Ernst, and the wife of the Elector of Brandenburg,—afterwards King of Prussia,—attracted him to Berlin, which became his genuine home. He founded in 1700 the Society, afterwards (1744) the Academy, of Sciences, but failed to see established like institutions at Vienna and St Petersburg. After the death of the Prussian queen in 1705 he returned to philosophy, discouraged by coldness both at Berlin and Hanover. His pamphlets on the war of succession and many other matters cannot even be enumerated here. The new prince of Brunswick, later George I. of England, did not care for the chief thinker of Germany, and when Leibniz died on 14th

November 1716 no member of the court and no minister of religion attended his burial.

The system of Leibniz may be said to begin in an effort to harmonise his revulsions against various precursors. He wrote much against Descartes, especially against his dualism. His equal aversion to Spinoza may be seen in his *Drift of his system.* *Considérations sur la Doctrine d'un Esprit universel unique* (1702). In the *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement humain* (1704, not published till long after), he dissects at length the *Essay* of Locke. His most famous if not his greatest work, and the chief one that came out in his lifetime, arose partly out of conversations with the Queen of Prussia, and partly out of criticisms offered by Bayle, in his article *Rorarius*, upon the doctrine of the pre-established harmony. Leibniz held that his primal substances, or *monads*, could not act directly on one another. But the mind and body are monads, and their mutual action, like that between other parts of the universe, has to be explained. Mind and body, said Leibniz, are timed together once for all, like two clocks disconnected in machinery, by the divine power. Hence arose the whole issue, What are the aims of God in dealing with the actual world? What is his justification in choosing this world, out of all those that are possible to his power and present to his mind? What is the place of evil in the scheme? The solution of Leibniz is an optimism that rests on a thorough-going teleology, and on the assumption that God's choice must be perfect. It is embodied in his *Essais de Theodicée sur*

la Bonté de Dieu, la Liberté de l'Homme, et l'Origine du Mal (1710). The later *Principes de la Nature et de la Grâce fondés en Raison* shows his adjustment of this great construction to theological dogmas. Such writings soon became a manual everywhere for the defence of the articles that were menaced by the critical spirit, and their echo is loudly heard in England, especially in writers like Clarke and Archbishop King.

Leibniz may be studied from more points of view than we can here recount. He is a very great mathematician and physicist, convinced equally that mechanical law always obtains in nature, and that such law cannot explain it. He is the inventor of the most poetical fantasy that is to be heard in the rational age—nay, of perhaps the greatest philosophic dream since Plato. It is designed to reconcile the mechanical with the metaphysical account of the world, spirit, and God. The *Monadologie* was written in 1714 for Prince Eugene of Savoy; a German and a Latin version appeared in 1720-21; the original French was only published in 1840. Several earlier writings lead up to its principle; but the term *monad*, which Leibniz adapted from its kindred usage by Bruno, he does not seem to use till about 1697. The monad is the constituent unit of things, and is a centre of force, perception, and desire. The world is made up of an infinite continuity of monads, ranging from what is apparently lifeless up to God. The soul-monad (like its inventor) is fully cosmopolitan, and is the highest in the terrestrial order. It is a clear mirror of the

universe of other monads, all of which it knows in their true connections. The other monads in the animal, vegetable, inorganic order are also mirrors, but continuously and successively dimmer; but even the lowest have some measure both of perception and of striving. The relation of monads, which are metaphysical points, to phenomena on one side, and to the arch-monad, *monas monadum*, which is God, on the other, presents difficulties. Leibniz, in his applications of this fantasy to theology, and to physics, and to ethics, touches every shore of philosophy; and the literary historian can only note that his mark among thinkers is the union of the widest, if not the truest or soundest construction, with encyclopedic knowledge, and with the Platonic bent. On this triple reckoning he is not below comparison with the greatest of thinkers. He cannot, however, strictly be called one of the greatest of writers of philosophy. He could seldom use his own tongue; his haste and distractions were enormous; he spent himself, not without some loss of independence, on the personal affairs of his patrons. Much that he did is a kind of philosophical journalism, and much again is scattered over his tomes of correspondence, itself of the broadest scope. He did not shape into complete finish any considerable work except the *Théodicée*. But he is like Plato in many things, and not least in his power of letting his intellect keep pace with his utmost dreams and subtleties. He is lucid and not difficult in style; he is easier to read than most of his expounders. Now and

*The Monad: :
general scope
of Leibniz.*

then, at the height of a long-toiled argument, he ends in a rush of figure and appeal. His influence, after his system had been imperfectly wrought into that of Wolff (1679-1754), can be tracked far down in the rationalistic enlightenment of Germany.

Nothing is quite like the fortunes of German poetry and romance between the Peace of Westphalia and the appearance of Lessing. The action of *The arrears of literature.* French upon English literature in the thirteenth century is a simpler phenomenon of somewhat the same kind. The Southern civility, the shapely example of the Southern tongue and art, struggle to infuse themselves into the German or English stock, which from one point of view is uncouth and stubborn, but from another may even be called fastidious; for it is ever snatching and discarding one pattern after another, which is really alien to its genius, until the right one is at last attained. Some of these experiments were happy, like the introduction of the *trouvère* metres in the earlier, or of the picaresque story in the later period. Some, like the copies of the Charlemagne romances, or of the satires of Boileau, were unhappy. But even the failures were a revelation; they did not leave literary art where they found it; at the worst they hastened the extinction of still earlier failures. In either case the salvage is not great, and little is accomplished in proportion to the bulk of imitative industry. In Germany the influences at work are many and interwoven, and can only be rapidly summarised.

Hettner, a very philosophical critic, describes this

character of German letters, in the sphere of artistic invention ("Kunst und Dichtung"), as an opposition between the spirit of the Renaissance and the national genius. And it is fair to see, in the entire progress down to Lessing, a crude effort to assimilate one after another of those forms that the Renaissance had directly or indirectly begotten. Very early in the century the craft of learned poetry, and certain metres of the degenerate time like the Alexandrine, "male and female," had been installed by Opitz. But the so-called "second Silesian school" had succeeded, who drew their methods of learned art partly from decadent Italy, and partly from the pastoral and heroic romances. The ringleaders were Casper von Lohenstein (1635-83) and Christian von Hofmannswaldau (1617-79). Marino and his following, Guarini, D'Urfé, and later the Scudéry's, inspired the strangest conglomerate of false tastes, in which the only living worth was the desire to attain literary art of some kind at any cost. German conceitedness, German preciousness, German pastoral elegance, are not inviting studies; but they did their service, though they often outlived their welcome. They slowly melted into a second-hand and second-rate classicism.

The most patient of the native historians find themselves a little stricken in the deserted mines of romance — chivalrous, pastoral, and
Romance. heroic. These kinds had died hard on their own soil; but when their French and English satirists were already out of employment, the Germans, two generations in arrear, were still fabricating

them, and calling for new editions. Hebrew subjects (*Assenat*, 1670, and *Simson*, 1679) were elaborated and adorned by Philipp Zesen in 1200 pages. As late as 1677 came an *Octavia*, the second story of Duke Anton Ulrich, succeeding *Die Syrerin Aramena*; and the *Hercules* (1659) of Andreas Bueholtz ran to its fourth edition in the eighteenth century. Such examples must suffice to denote the types current and their popularity. They suffer the condemnation passed upon them by the classical age. They are vast in scale, and, whether historical, mythical, or biblical, they agree in being neither what they affect to be nor anything legible in compensation. Their long-drawn-out sentiment, their false colouring, their edifying design, and their size, which man "of all his works created hugest," need no denouncing. One, the *Arminius* (1689) of Lohenstein, has a strain of patriot reality, and certain of its 3000 pages which approach to history are told in a plain and smooth manner that is not so unworthy. Others of these productions also did their part in fitting the language for narrative, and fragments of them remained in the affections of Goethe.¹

But one work, which is still alive in the midst of this necropolis, would distinguish the noblest period

¹ L. Cholevius, *Die bedeutendsten deutschen Romane des xvii. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1866, gives profuse analyses and extracts from eleven of the chief of these romances, and makes the best of the job; but it is cruel reading. The originals are hard to reach, and I rely on this and other chroniclers. See Gervinus, *Gesch. der deutschen Dichtung*, ed. Bartsch, Leipzig, 1873, &c., vol. iv.; and L. F. Robertag, *Gesch. des Romans in Deutschland*, Breslau, 1876, &c., vol. i.

of fiction. Its pattern is Spanish, not French or Italian, but the scene and spirit are German. The picaresque novel has always been transplanted with better fruit than the more ambitious kinds, for the vagrant observer is a creature of every land, and the dramatic framework is of the loosest and homeliest kind. The great war, which in many ways had crushed the inwardness, the humour, and the dreaming passion inherent in the German, nurtured them all in the author of *Der abenteuerliche Simplicius Simplicissimus*.¹ The first two instalments came out in 1668; later ones were enlarged, not for the better; and all were issued under various anagrammatic disguises of the author's name, Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (1625?-1676).

This writer was born at Gelnhausen, in Hesse, served as a soldier, earned promotion by his service, became a provincial functionary, and died a *Simplicissimus*. Catholic, probably a convert. He began with romantic novels, but the fame of his chief work happily diverted his taste. Cleared of sequels and excrescences, the life of Simplicius falls into a natural trilogy, and the usual picaro's string of adventures is replaced by a progress which is not only dramatic but inward and spiritual. Simplicius, apparently

¹ Reprint with variants, ed. Keller, Stuttgart, 1854, 2 vols. (34 and 35 in *Bibliothek des litt. Vereins*); of 1669 edition, in *Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke des xvi. und xvii. Jahrh.* (Nos. 19 to 25). Halle, 1880. Ed., with introduction, in vol. ix. (other novels of the author in vols. x., xi.) of Goedeke and Tittmann's *Deutsche Dichter des xvii. Jahrh.*, Leipzig, 1869, &c. For more see *Etude sur le Simplicissimus de Grimmelshausen*, by F. Antoine, Paris, 1882.

the son of certain Spessart peasants, is brought up by them in bestial ignorance, and his home is looted and outraged by marauders during his childhood. He is then taught and reared in ascetic innocence by a hermit, to whom he comes in his flight, and who afterwards proves to be a soldier, widowed and retired from the world, and the father of Simplicius himself. The hermit dies, and his brother-in-law, the governor of Hanover, adopts Simplicius, as the butt and victim of his brutal little court. What follows is a surprising study of the awakening of the virgin brain in Simplicius. He fools his tormentors; he relates the life before him with gross and drastic minuteness, but with ease and power. At last he falls into it himself, and the second act imperceptibly begins. He turns a complete rogue; but he is always nettled, and is at last to be redeemed, by an awkward conscience. He becomes bandit, forager, masquer in women's dress, body-servant to a Swedish colonel and an Imperial dragoon, and at last emerges as a leading free-lance, selected by the great for his blackguardly resource and dash. He is trapped into two bad marriages, but gets away. In Paris he is "taken into the Venusberg," and rehearses something of the Bellaston infamy recorded in *Tom Jones*. He then loses both his health and his hire, prowls about with a strange assassin, Olivier, whom he has known of old, and at last falls in with another old companion, the virtuous Herzbruder, who induces him to go upon pilgrimage. The third act approaches, though Sim-

plicius is still capable of boiling the penitential peas in his shoes after one day's experience of walking. At last he commences hermit. The author bids adieu to the world for his hero in a rhetorical chapter borrowed from Guevara, which is a pattern of detestable style and a foil to the rest of the novel. But quiet and cleanness are recaptured by Simplicius; the world, at first a pure blank to him, then his seducer and tyrant, is now detected and abandoned; and here the organic part of the story ends. An addition relates his pilgrimage to the East, and his sojourn until his death on a desert island, whence his history is taken home by a wandering Dutch sailor. But the proper scene of Grimmelshausen is the Germany of the Thirty Years' War, and he uses it again in some other tales that are true pendants to *Simplicissimus*, such as *Trutz Simplex*, which describes the wanderings of a kind of Moll Flanders in the trail of the army, and *Springinsfeld* (1670), where the picaro is a beggar. Other detached works, like *Das wunderbarliche Vogelnest*, are half bourgeois, half magical fiction. At times the detailed and positive graphic humour of the writer escapes into a free fantasy that reminds us of Holberg's Lucianic excursions. Grimmelshausen's indictment of his defaced and deformed fatherland is wildly spoken by a madman whom Simplicius meets in his travels, and who thinks himself Jupiter sitting in tribunal. In the same strain the hero describes the vanity of human life to the king of the mermen on the floor of the Mummelsee. *Das Vogelnest* is a magic nest with the

qualities of the ring of Gyges; also it is itself unseen, and is discovered by its shadow being visible in the water. But these are excursions; the sly simplicity and profusion of the style suit best with the large, positive, elastic purpose: and though faintly provincialised, it is the most easy and lifelike of German.

Simplicissimus left many imitators; but one romance of the Maundeville-Münchhausen type is more not-

able. There is a gross, formless, and infantine humour, genuine of its kind, and free

Wise. from the current faults of style, in *Schelmuffskeys Reisebeschreibung*¹ (1696-1697), written by Christian Reuter. The Rabelaisian birth of the braggart rogue-hero is followed by monstrous wanderings and adventures. Didactic satire is more evident in the romances of Christian Weise² (1642-1708), of which the chief is *Die drei ärgsten Erznarren in der ganzen Welt* (1672). The humours and foibles of provincial Germany defile before the eyes of certain travellers, who are in quest of the "three arch-fools of the earth," and who are themselves strong candidates for the distinction. Weise, a "Rektor" at Zittau, wrote pedagogic tracts, in which he laboured to restore the German language in the universities; books on poetic, which in his anxiety to seek for the plain, popular, and natural, he may be said to reduce to a *prosaic*; students' songs, which are better: and a multitude of "comedies," also

¹ Reprinted in *Neudrucke*, &c., Nos. 57 and 58. Halle, 1885. Reuter's other works in *Neudrucke*, Nos. 90, 91.

² In *Neudrucke*, &c., 1878, Nos. 12-11. For the best account of Weise, see H. Palm, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Lit. des xvi. und xvii. Jahrhunderts*, Breslau, 1877.

designed for his students, on biblical and historical and other themes. He left little that can now be read, but he stood nearly alone in his revulsion against pomposity and *Schulst* of all kinds; and, seemingly without any inspiration from abroad, he cried aloud for the observance of nature and simplicity, falling often into mere flatness. The other poets who were import agents for similar ideas at the end of the century were mere ephemeral echoes of Boileau and the classicists. True Gallicism came later with Frederick the Great. Meantime the cleft between the national genius and the modern forms remained unaltered.

But the German spirit, neither helped nor hindered from abroad, had already spoken in the pulpit and the *Religion and* national hymns. Here, thanks in the first *pietism.* instance to Luther, it had found one of its predestined forms. The preaching and sacred lyric of the time is very ample. It is of course not confined to the Lutheran or even to the Protestant fold. The passion for a personal, mystical, and inward utterance in verse extends to Calvinists from Catholics; and the phenomenon of pietism, already noticed in France and England, had its powerful and far-reaching counterpart in Germany. It belongs rather to the history of the nation than strictly to that of letters, but its literary drift is clear. Pietism, in all its hues, whether that of George Fox, of Mme. Guyon, or of Molinos, played a similar part in presence of rationalism and classicism. It delayed the death of the poetical sense, of the sense of the infinite: it turned

the individual within himself; but it failed to comprehend the movement of culture, society, and letters, or the emancipation of the intellect. The names of Gottfried Arnold, of Dippel, of Spener, and of many more, invite study, and the points of contact or revulsion between pietism and philosophy are of high interest. At other points, again, pietism touches letters. The Catholic Johann Scheffler,¹ who wrote under the name of Angelus Silesius, perverted his talent into religious verse of a sickly pastoral-erotic kind that was much in acceptance but is all the more disagreeable. Yet the gnomie couplets in his *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* reveal a radical and intimate kind of pantheism, whose likeness, doubtless accidental, to Spinoza's, attracted the blame of Leibniz. The chief pulpit orator among the Catholics, Ulrich Megerle, known as Abraham a Santa Clara,² who ministered mainly at Vienna, is remembered for the use that Schiller made of one of his sermons in *Wallenstein's Lager*. It is not unjustly described by Carlyle as "a fervent kind of preaching run mad." *Auf, auf, ihr Christen*, which has been reprinted, is a frantic appeal to rise against the Turks: it is filled with a tedious euphuism and with a mass of dead detail; but the writer has a fund of wild or homely image, and a naïf intensity of appeal, that keeps his shapeless

¹ *Poetische Werke*, ed. Rosenthal, Regensburg, 2 vols., 1862. *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* in *Neudrucke*, &c., Nos. 135-138.

² *Werke*, Passau, 1835, &c., many vols. Study by Karajan, Vienna, 1867. *Judas* in 3 vols., Lindau, 1872. *Auf, Auf, Ihr Christen*, in *Wiener Neudrucke*, No. 12, Vienna, 1883 (out first in 1683).

writing fresh. In his love for screaming titles (like *Hui und Pfui der Welt*: or *Gack Gack*), for antithesis, refrains, vividness, and tasteless emphasis, he is at his worst like some Marprelate pamphleteer and at his best like Thomas Nash. In all that concerns form, he measures the lagging of Germany behind the country of Bourdaloue or even of Segneri (see p. 386 *post*). He turned the legendary wanderings of Judas into a romance that has the same qualities of wild gesticulation and vivacity. The *Pia Desideria* (1680) of Spener, a leader of pietism, is prose of a more rhetorical stamp.

The chief amongst the Protestant singers was Paulus Gerhardt (1607-1676), pastor in Berlin, latterly Arch-
Gerhardt and
others. deacon in Lübben, and between his two
 tenures ejected as an unbending Lutheran who would have no concord with the Calvinists. But there is nothing of the formularist in the *Geistliche Kirchen-Melodien*, the *Praxis Pietatis melica*, and in the other garlands that finally furnished his *Geistliche Andachten, bestehend in 120 Liedern*¹ (1667-1668). These verses run with quick impressible sentiment over the whole scale of Lutheran devotion, from blackest prostration to the full delight of the faithful. They are in many rhythms, of which the briefer and more buoyant are the happiest, and they have little of the mere expletive matter or *chevilles* that are the worst peril of hymn-writers. Gerhardt has a feeling for nature not unlike that of his contemporary

¹ Many eds.; e.g., in Goedeke and Tittmann, *Deutsche Dichter des xvii. Jahrh.*, Leipzig, vol. xii., 1877; ed. Bachmann, Berlin, 1866.

Vaughan. But his feeling is not curious and solitary; it is none too deep for a company of devout souls chanting together their rapture at the close of a thirty years' war, or at the arrival of Easter in springtime.

There are many other writers whose hymns have the pietistic note, like Gottfried Arnold; but it must suffice to name the chief singer of the Calvinistic Church, Joachim Neander.¹ His *Bundeslieder und Dankpsalmen* (1680) are, as the title "Covenant-Songs" implies, severely dogmatic in basis. But they contain some truly exultant and transporting measures, the best of which are in long lines interspaced with short, like the famous "Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren," and "Eile, Herr, mir beizustehen, ich vergeh!" A strange transition to the new age is to be heard in the semi-epic or choric verse of Barthold Heinrich Brockes² (1680-1747), who emerged, after tarrying with the Silesians and classicists, into a style of his own. He may be said to have improvised in nine volumes his *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* (1721-1748), written in a surprising variety and facility of ode-like verse, often highly melodious: it is a long-drawn-out *Benedicite Opera omnia*, touched with sentimental Deism, teleology, and tedium, and musical rather than pictorial in its profuse descriptions of natural things.

German classicism in its early Gallic form is of

¹ Iken, *J. Neander. Sein Leben und seine Lieder*, Bremen, 1880 (full reprint).

² Selections in Rassmann's *Deutsche Anthologie*, Zwickau, 1821, vol. xv.; and cp. A. Brandl, *B. H. Brockes*, Innsbruck, 1878.

scanty interest: it is hardly of more interest than the experiments of the English "mob of gentlemen." By the end of the century a profuse and insignificant school of Gallic poets¹ was established, among whom

Gallicism and Canitz, Besser, and Neukirch are remem-
Anglicism: bered, and many of whom were gathered
Haller. and favoured at Berlin by the first king of

Prussia. The least imitative of this group is Christian Wernicke, who mocked in tolerable couplets both the Silesians and the extremer mimics of classical forms. But all these writers disappeared, after undeniably serving to smooth and file the diction of satiric or didactic verse. The *grand siècle* hardly began to exert its full effect on German letters until it was itself over; and even then its influence was complicated with a philosophy and a tone to which it had been a stranger. The dealings of Voltaire with Frederick the Great fall to the next volume, like the reign, critical and poetical, of Gottsched, who preceded and partly provoked the heroic age of German verse. The career, for instance, of Albrecht von Haller² (1708-1777) would carry us too far, but it illustrates many traits of German classicism. Haller was a great doctor of science, a great traveller, and at moments a great poet. His fragment

¹ For selections from all in this paragraph, see Kurz, and vol. xiv. of W. Müller and Karl Förster's *Bibliothek der deutschen Dichter des xvii. Jahrh.*, Leipzig, 1822, &c. (includes also verse by the head Silesians, Hofmannswaldau—who has one sweet *Abendlied*—and Lohenstein).

² *Gedichte*, ed. Hirzel (with introduction), in *Bibliothek alterer Schriftwerke der deutschen Schweiz*, vol. iii., Frauenfeld, 1882.

On Eternity is better than the best of Young. His most famed poem, *Die Alpen* (1732), though unlike Thomson, is part of the same revival of natural description, and its rhythms, while heavy, are sometimes impressive and dignified. His didactic and critical verses on superstition and the origin of evil are duller experiments in the familiar kinds of Pope. He was struck with the native force and personality of the English writers. Rochester and Swift—to whom he adds Butler—are, he justly says, talents of a style that is original to their own land, and unknown elsewhere. Haller also celebrates the honours paid in England to science, and in his positive, rather sombre temper, he might be an Englishman of the period. The *contes*, fables, and playful or reflective lyrics of Friedrich von Hagedorn (1708-1754) are not wholly imitative, and have a certain grace and ease of their own. But Hagedorn studied La Fontaine, Prior, Pope, Swift, and Young, as well as Greek and Roman lyric; and his chief success lay in moulding German verse to an unaccustomed measure of minute finish.

England, in fact, began to play its part of liberator in Germany as well as in Scandinavia. Not only was Pope imitated afar off, but the teeming literature of *Robinsonaden*, which ran its course through the eighteenth century, had its sources in Defoe. But we can only refer to two other English kinds that were directly transplanted. One was the moral periodical of Addison and Steele, and the other was the conventional literary criticism. Before the death of Addison in 1729 the forms that he had perfected had already

struck root in Germany, and even more in German Switzerland. For the last fifty years the literature of the German cantons had been profuse but not very distinguished, and had borne much the same relation to German writing at large as that of the French cantons had borne to the main stock of classicism. But in 1721 Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger had brought out at Zürich *Die Discourse der Mahler*.¹ A syndicate of Hamburg worthies, three years later, published at Hamburg *Der Patriot*, one of the most noteworthy of these periodicals. *Die Vernünftigen Tadeln*, at Leipzig (1725), was under the auspices of the arch-critic Gottsched. A contemporary list names fifteen other German sheets of the same kind within the same limits of date, and within the following thirty years the imitations pass counting. The happy thought of Steele and Addison found thus a surprising lease of life abroad, and the reasons for its popularity were much the same as at home. The outer shape of the "Wochenblätter," their desire to avoid dullness, their moralising and civilising aim, their scope and choice of themes, are in most cases

¹ *Discourse der Mahler*, part i., in *Bibliothek, &c.*, 2nd series, Heft 2. For all this see Baechtold, *Geschichte der Literatur der deutschen Schweiz*; and also F. Servaes, *Die Poetik Gottscheds und der Schweizer*, in *Quellen und Forschungen*, No. 60, Strassburg, 1887. And for the later dispute with Gottsched, see Crüger, *G. und die Schweizer*, Berlin and Stuttgart, 1882. For the periodical literature of this kind see a fairly complete list in M. Kawczynski, *Studien zur Geschichte der moralisirenden Wochenschriften des xviii. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1880. Cp. Milberg, *Die deutschen moralischen Wochenschriften des xviii. Jahrh.*, Meissen, n.d.

uniform. The cleft between the citizen class and letters was deeper in Germany than in England, and style on all hands was more backward. This chosen instrument of prose classicism was destined to work with much precision upon societies alive to the didactic instinct and peopled with second-rate talents. It was a great bid for the awakening minds of the reading class in a time when ideas were much diffused and diluted. For the German periodicals no high literary rank has ever been claimed, and they are generally agreed to fall much below their models, as well as below the kindred experiments in Sweden and Holland. But they served a need, and lasted on long after German thought and art had acquired independence.

The critical axioms, common to the Swiss writers and Gottsched before their schism, are blank of all originality. They are a kind of compound drawn from Boileau and *The Spectator*. The *Critische Dichtkunst* of Breitinger (1740) is a formal statement of them; but they can equally well be seen in the early papers of the *Discourse der Mahlern*. The formula is the imitation of nature, and the principles of imitating in all the arts are assumed to be virtually the same. Hence arose a school of descriptive writing and literary painting which was only shattered by the distinctions drawn in the *Laokoon*. Reason and measure are preached without much sense of the higher felicities of measure or the deeper workings of reason. But these early imitators, though now barely readable, did in two ways historic service. At any rate, they finished the deliverance of their country from the old Silesian

affectations—thus repeating, on a smaller theatre, the effort of Boileau sixty years earlier. And they also furthered a prouder design, the deliverance of their native language. Here they fell into line with Thomasins, Weise, and many earlier aspirants. They abolished the atrocious amalgam of Latin and French phrasing which at one time had beset German, and they gave it an unknown degree of urbanity and directness both in prose and in verse.

But before classicism had stated its full pretensions in Germany, a single poet, Christian Günther,¹ saved the record for purity and sincerity of lyric power (1695-1723). His life and passions are written down in his songs. He tells of his happy, dreaming childhood, soon disenchanted by the harshness of his father; of his tantalised and foiled wooing of one "Leonore," who married another man, became a widow, was again almost won by Günther, but again wavered away from him; of the mad life that he led in the meanwhile at Wittenberg and elsewhere, and the students' ditties that he poured out, some of which are still sung; of his casual vows and fickle interludes with other women; of his passages of devotion, and of his final vagabond despair and penury. His works are a mass of songs, satires, and complaints, which reflect faithfully every whim, regret, and resentment, and even his passing adherence to the Silesians and classicists. It is a consolation, after stumbling over

¹ *Gedichte* (with introduction by Tittmann) in Goedeke and Tittmann, *Deutsche Dichter des xviii. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1874; first collected 1724.

the impossible Lohenstein and the illegible Canitz, to light suddenly on the noble and cordial rhythms,—

“Treuer Sinn,
Wirf den falschen Kummer hin !
Lass den Zweifel der Gedanken
Nicht mit meiner Liebe zanken,
Da ich längst dein Opfer bin.”

Or the gallant wanderer's song,—

“Bruder, komm und lass uns wandern,
Habe Leid und Lust gemein.”

Compared with these, or with

“Wie gelacht,
Vor geliebt, itzt ausgelacht !”

Günther's much - praised song to Prince Eugen (“Eugen ist fort; Ihr Musen, nach !”) is frosty and mannered. He had great skill in occasional and complimentary verse, and the judgment of Goethe, to be seen in the seventh book of *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, may close this section: “A marked talent, gifted with a poet's senses, with memory, with imaginative power, with the capacity to grasp and to represent things; pre - eminently fertile, adaptive in rhythm, full of ‘Geist’ and wit; multifariously instructed withal; —enough to say that he had everything that may serve to produce, in the midst of life, a second life, through the means of poetry. . . . The element of rawness and wildness belongs to his time, to his manner of living, to his character above all, or to his lack of character if we will. ‘Er wusste sich nicht zu zähmen, und so zerrann ihm sein Leben wie seine Dichten.’”

Scandinavia.

Free culture and original invention were delayed longer among the Scandinavian peoples¹ than elsewhere. Their remoteness, their foreign *The Far North: occurs.* and fratricidal wars, and the domination of the Lutheran Church, were among the hindrances. They suffered in an acuter form some of the drawbacks of Germany, which acted as a screen between

¹ (Danish books published at Copenhagen unless otherwise noted.) Ph. Schweitzer, *Gesch. der skandinavischen Litteratur* (Bd. viii. in *Gesch. der Weltlitteratur in Einzeldarstellungen*, Leipzig, n.d.), is full and learned. F. Winkel Horn, *History of the Literature of the Scandinavian North*, tr. Anderson, Chicago, 1884, is a convenient popular summary in English. For *Sweden*: J. H. Schück's standard *Svensk Litteraturhistoria*, Stockholm, 1886. The older works of P. Atterbom (*Svenska Sjäre och Skaldler* (*Swedish Sars and Poets*), 2 vols., Upsala, 1841), and Lénström, *Svenska Poesiens Historia*, Örebro, 1839, are of value. B. Meijer's little *Svenskt Litteraturlerikon*, Stutt., 1884, is useful for biography; and Noreen and Meyer's *Valda Stycken af Svenska Författare*, Upsala, 1893, for selections. For the verse, the great collection is P. Hanselli's *Samlade Vitterhetsarbeten af svenska Författare* (*Collected belles-lettres of Swedish authors*), Upsala, 1871, &c. (from Stjernhjelm to Dalin). *Denmark and Norway*: For the historical conditions, and the national scope and work of Holberg, see J. E. W. Sars, *Udsigt over den norske Historie*, pt. iv., ch. iv.-vi., Copenhagen and Christiania, 1891 (the whole book deserves translation); for the literary history, with good comment and bibliographies and illustrations, P. Hansen, *Illustreret dansk Literaturhistorie*, 1895, &c., vol. ii. (*Holberg and his time*). Of previous histories, F. Winkel Horn's *Den danske Litteraturs Historie*, 1879, &c., is perhaps the best. For the religious writing in the Scandinavian countries, C. F. Rosenberg, *Nordboernes Aandsliv* (*Mental Life of the Northerners*), 3 vols., 1878. The *Dansk biografisk Lexikon*, ed. J. F. Brücka, in progress, is admirable. *Iceland*: G. Vigfússon, *Prolegomena to Sturlunga Saga*, Oxford, 1878 (vol. i. pp. cxlvii, clxxx). Ample matter, not else collected, in J. C. Poestion, *Islandische Dichter der Neuzeit*, Leipzig, 1898.

North and South before she was herself illuminated. And they rehearse in some degree the same literary history as Germany. They struggled to create a literature under successive waves of exotic influence: classic allegory and Renaissance sonnet, encyclopædic learning, Boileau and correctness, Addison and urbanity. These alien influences helped to soften and mould the material which they could hardly penetrate. It may be said that many good literary forms, when they died, went to limbo in the far North. In Sweden, for instance, despite the efforts of Queen Christina, everything was late. The chief satiric epic was printed in 1658, the chief collection of sonnets in 1680, and the first imitation of *The Spectator* not till 1732. Nor did any of the Northern nations count a philosophic mind of the higher scope. Hence their emancipation, when it came, had in the main two distinct springs. One was the patriotic instinct, working chiefly in the fields of antiquarian effort and linguistic reform. Another, which appeared much later, but to some extent wrought in unison with the first, was classicism. And it will be seen that, though France played her part, classicism came in its liberating form from England. Holberg, who set free the Dano-Norwegian mind, and Olof von Dalin, the gifted and plastic transmitter of foreign forms to Sweden, appeared well in the wake of their masters, Swift and Addison. In sketching the preparation for this change, which was not fully apparent till the extreme end of our period, it is just to treat the whole of Scandinavia as a kind of federation in the fields of learning, science,

antiquarian research, and religion. Their hymnody, in especial, has a common stamp. The secular inventive art, or "Dichtung," of each land may be noted separately.

After the middle of the seventeenth century the scientific grew slowly out of the pedant age. The elder type of polyhistor, so profusely flouted by Holberg, was long prosperous. Such, *Federal learning and science.* to give but one instance, was the Dane, Ole Borch, who died in 1690, and whose "subjects were theology, philosophy, philology, poetry, anatomy, chemistry, and botany," and who also practised as a doctor—with what fruits is not on record. The largest monument of Swedish erudition was pre-critical, and was inspired by the passion for discovering historic glories in the remote past. Allusion (p. 23 *supra*) has already been made to the *Atlant* or *Manhem* (1675-1702), which identified Sweden with the Platonic Atlantis, the first of inhabited lands, and the source of human culture. Its author was another omniscient, Olof Rudbeck the elder, and its great repute measures the slow progress of criticism. But Rudbeck, as well as his son of the same name, earned juster honours in anatomy and botany, and in Denmark can be found several men of science of international distinction. Such were Ole Römer, who discovered (1676) the law of the velocity of light; the anatomist Thomas Bartholin; and the greater and more singular Niels Stensen, or Nicolaus Stenonis (1638-1686), a famed pioneer in anatomy and geology. Stensen could not adjust science and providence in the same way as Boyle and his English con-

temporaries; he met Spinoza on his travels, but he also met Bossuet, the great persuader; he horrified Denmark by turning first Romanist and then priest; and he ended his days in the dreariness, which his letters duly deplore, of a Danish bishopric, as it were *in partibus infidelium*.

Everywhere philology and antiquarian learning were awakened, and often they were limited, by the national and patriotic instinct. There was no really *The Northern past.* great humanist in Scandinavia. But the interest in the Northern past served as a clue to escape from endless, aimless, and sterilising erudition. The greatest work of this kind was done in Iceland. The better part of Old Icelandic literature, both prose and verse—the prose being one of the chief glories of the middle ages, and the verse not one of the least—was gathered and secured for good by Árni Magnússon (1663-1730), the Icelandic, in his great collection at Copenhagen. Most of his MSS. were personally procured in Iceland (from 1702-1712); and even in the Copenhagen fire of 1728 it is pronounced that “hardly one MS. of any account has perished.” There were many copyists, and the first collection of some of the major sagas (including the *Landnáma*, or history of the Icelandic settlement) was issued by Bishop Thord in 1688-89. The *Monumenta Danica* of Ole Worm (died 1654) was earlier, and Worm did work in medicine as well as archaeology. Later again came the *Historia Rerum Norregicarum* (1711) of Thormóður Torfason, or Torfæus, which shows very extensive research, and the desire, if not the full power, to sift evidence. The

chief enthusiast for the vernaculars was Peder Syv,¹ whose *Considerations on the Cimbric Tongue* (1663), although they enter into the connections of Danish with Hebrew, helped by their terse and hearty style to stay the monopoly of Latin and to earn for the author the title of *Philologus regius linguar Danicar*. Lastly, the maker of Swedish letters, Stjernhjelm, included national antiquities among his countless interests, and had many companions.

The learned theology in all the countries was immense and tyrannous. Secular philosophy was over-
Theology shadowed, and a stray Platonist like Stjernhjelm was an exception. The expositions and refutations of Descartes, elsewhere so profuse, lingered here in coming. The Lutheran creed was dominant, especially in Denmark. Bulky bodies of dogmatic, numberless polemics, and fewer eirenics, tomes *contra Bossuetum* and commentaries on the Bible text, handbooks of morality, myriads of charges and Lutheran anniversary harangues, fill the bibliographies.² As we pass from the dogmatic to the pastoral and devotional literature, Latin gives way to the vernaculars. Certain practical discourses or *Postilla* came nearer to life, warmth, and style, and lived on among the folk like the books of our Baxter or Sherlock. Such above all were the homilies or *Hússpostilla* of Jón Vídalín in Iceland. Each language had a good religious prose to fall back upon in its Bible; and the best prose of all, dating from the two

¹ F. W. Horn, *Peder Syv*, 1878.

² Chr. W. Bruun, *Bibliotheca Danica*, 1872, &c.

sixteenth-century bishops, Oddr and Gudbrandur, was largely embodied in the Icelandic Bible of 1644, which was long current.

But life, warmth, and style distinguish above all the hymnody of the Northern nations. The religious *and hymnody:* verse saves their literary rank during *Pjetursson,* the seventeenth century. Perhaps this *Kingo, and Frese.* abundant little shaded fountain of wayside poetry is the best refreshment that meets us during their embarrassed, dark, and imitative days. It is mixed with no foreign stream, it springs up from rocky ground. Each of the languages has at least one real poet. In Iceland, where German was well known but the German influence was least felt, the strict heavy Alexandrine was escaped. A light native line, elastic, and full of slurs, and full even to excess of "hunting of the letter," was employed. The sweetest hymn-writer of the North, Hallgrímur Pjetursson of Hólar,¹ wrote before 1660, and printed in 1666, his fifty *Passion-Psalms*. This lovely lyrical narrative of the Passion is still said to be familiar in Iceland. Despite a careful conquest over technique (which is also apparent in Hallgrímur's other work, *Spiritual Songs*), its happy dancing measures are childlike in spirit and birdlike in ease. It is delicate and intimate, but not, like some of the German and Latin Catholic hymns, too familiar for our tastes. Another fertile hymn-writer in Iceland was Stefan Ólafsson, who translated the psalms

¹ *Fimmtin Passion-Sálmur*, Reykjavík, 1890, "39th edition." See Poestion, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

and hymns of Pjëtursson's Danish brother in the craft, Thomas Kingo¹ (1634-1704). Kingo was by descent half a Scot, and composed much desultory devout matter both before and after his *Spiritual Choir*, of which the first part came out in 1674, the second and more powerful in 1681. The correct instinct has not travelled to Kingo, and he is able to be crude; but his buoyant changing lines belie his favourite mood of penitence, and his tide of energy, fed from the heart, bears him up from his ashes into a superb flight of triumph. Kingo's verses are part of the Danish soul, and the definitive edition of the national psalm-book (named after him, but not really directed by him) contains many of his versions. He left followers, of whom Adolf Brorson, a more even writer, but still esteemed by his countrymen, is the chief. In Sweden, the official verse-book of 1695 embodies several good hymns by Jesper Svedberg; but the religious soliloquies of Jacob Frese, the Finlander, whose merits have been acknowledged since his own day, are deemed the sweetest of the devotional verse in the great collections of Hanselli. Frese, dying in 1729, wrote amidst classicism, but was untouched by foreign influence, and could only deplore the Frenchifying of Swedish letters. His best sheaf of verses is called *Spring Thoughts in Sickness*, and they show the sensibility of an invalid, partly sharpened and partly foiled by his infirmities, to the vain promises of spring. An earlier poem of

¹ *Aandelige Sjungckor*, ed. Hammerich and Rode, 1856. Cp. R. Petersen, *T. Kingo og hans Samtid*, 1887 (*Kingo and his Time*).

much celebrity, and by no means without heavy force, is Bishop Haquin Spegel's *God's Work and Rest* (*Guðs Wærk och Hwila*, 1685), in long rhymed couplet. This, in form and origin, is also a typical production of the North. It is partly a following of the Danish Arrebo's vivid *Hæroëmron*, itself in turn a following of Du Bartas, and written in Alexandrines. Spegel's poem had similar vogue and qualities.

In pure literature of the secular kind the two main languages part company. The ten years of Queen
Sweden: Christina's power, 1644-54, are a chapter
Christina less of Swedish than of international literary history. Her Latinised and Gallicised court, frequented by Descartes, by Saumaise and the rival scholars of the Netherlands, by Huet of Avranches, was cosmopolitan, and her real language was an excellent French. Christina has really but one point of a queen's contact with the native Swedish literature, in the person of the remarkable man, whom it is certainly just to call its founder,¹ whom she patronised, honoured, and then, because of a piece of his uncourtly candour, threw over. The poetry of this writer, Georg
and Stjernhjelm. Stjernhjelm² (1598-1672), who originally used the surname of Lilja, is really his own: but his stamp of antiquarian patriot and savant

¹ The lyrics of Lars Wivallius (1605-69), a true *picaro* of letters, who is a little earlier, have a genuine ballad-like pathos and sweetness. See Schück, *Litteraturhistoria*, vol. i. pp. 213-218; and Hanselli, vol. ix.

² In Hanselli, vol. i.; and *Vitterhetsarbeten*, Stockh., 1818. Rosenhane in Hanselli, vol. i. (and see E. P. Meyer, *G. Rosenhane, en Studie*, Stockh., 1888); Eurelius and Leyoncrona, *ib.*, vol. vi.; Svedberg, vol. xv.; Triewald, vol. xviii.; Frese, vol. xx.

he owed to the training of Johannes Bureus (died 1652), the most thoroughly learned Swede of his time. Stjernhjelm's philology must not be judged by his attempts, begotten of Sweden's military greatness, and shared by Rudbeck, to discover in Swedish the parent of all the Southern languages. His philology was partly genuine; he is to be found editing Ulfilas, reading sagas, and making a glossary of Anglo-Saxon. The spirit in which he worked is very like that of the Danish philologist Syv; and there is a genuine power over animated prose, as well as the sacred fire of the humanist, in his preface to the *Treasury of the Gothic Speech*¹ (1643), which he refuses to see sophisticated with Southern words. "The honourable, old, irreproachable matron, who has enriched all these young damsels, how has she become so stricken with poverty? Age does much, scorn also; but the worst is this, that those showy ones, whom thou hast decked with thine own glory, tempt thine own sons away from thee." Stjernhjelm has also some of that unspoiled sense of mystery that awakens in the early humanist at the moment when language is thought of, not merely as a tool, or a matter for grammatical analysis, but in its source and power; "it is like fire, whereof we think nothing concerning its profit, so common it is amongst us." Speech and writing are both "messengers," and speech "a way for man to express his inconceivable thoughts by the manifold motions, adaptings, and linkings of the voice." Stjernhjelm left in print or writing a vast mass of dissertation on mathematics,

¹ *Gumbla Swca och Götha Måles Futebur.*

law, and almost every sort of knowledge, including philosophy. Formed before Descartes arose, and a true man of the late Renaissance, he held a form of Plotinism. But his verse stands out from his multifarious work, and is by no means that of a copyist, though scarcely that of a great poet.

Some dainty masques (*Captive Cupid* and others), which he wrote for Christina's court, do not show Stjernhjelm's originality so well as his two hexameter poems, which are over-ballasted with lumps of alliteration, dogged and minute in description, but strong. Both are didactic and secular; one is serio-comic, or rather Horatian, in tone, *A Reminder of the Pains of Marriage*,¹ and shows an innocent affinity to those authors, from Rabelais to Aretino, against whom the author solemnly inveighs in his more considerable piece *Hercules* (first printed 1658, and again with much else in his *Musæ sacrhizantes*, 1668). The simple tale of Xenophon and Silius is laboured into an outbreak of topical satire and angry pessimism. The author's motto, *Vixit, dum vixit, latus*, which is justified to him by contemporary witnesses, was out of his mind when he wrote his comparison of the human body, invaded by age, to a deserted house with guttering roof, bulging gables, and nettles sprouting. Atterbom, one of the most genial of the Swedish critics, claims for Stjernhjelm a clear, true sense of the antique: but his tapestry figures of Sloth and Luxury are liker those of Jean de Meung, and his manner of ending is not antique at all,—he does not declare

¹ *Bröllops Besvärer Hugkonungelse.*

which path Hercules elected. These poems really gave Sweden her first true pattern of words and measures poetically handled, and the same may be said of Stjernhjelm's Alexandrines and lyrics.

The pattern was not used. The "period of Stjernhjelm," usually taken to last till the emergence of Olof *The Epigoni* von Dalin in 1732, seems to have bred few *and Fricwald.* worthy disciples. Samuel Columbus, who described the Creation and its consequences in some clever Alexandrines, and Lagerlöf, a professor, who wrote one pretty song, *Elisandra*, are the most conspicuous of the crowd on whom Stjernhjelm's impetus is felt. But this impetus is spent or checked in some other poets of talent, who were busy with models that were themselves copies, with Marinists or Marinising Germans of the "second Silesian" group. The best of this school is Gunno Eurelius, who wrote under the name of Dalstjerna, and whose *King's Poet* (*Kunga Skald*), 1699, is an elegy of Charles XI. in *ottava rima*, patched and spoilt with conceits, but not without movement. Another importer of metres, Gustav Rosenhane, had little enough to say; but in his sonnet-series, *Wenerid*, he "follows Ronsard and Opitz more than Petrarch," using the Alexandrine, and announcing his passion for keeping the Swedish from being "rough, coarse, and inflexible." One of the sweetest of the exotic lyrics is the *Complaint over Iris departed*, by Liljenstedt; and out of a swarm it is only possible to name Leyonerona, the Swedish ambassador in London, who had some command of brief song-measures, and whose corpse, it is said, had

the distinction of being arrested for debt.¹ Indeed, the distracted voluble days between Stjernhjelm and Von Dalin are enlivened by a sharp writer, Samuel von Triewald (1688-1743), who was distinctly the earliest Augustan of any originality to write in Swedish, and who freely transcribed Boileau and La Fontaine in his war against bombast, hollow diction, and the whole melancholy outburst of poetry after Pultowa. Triewald made it his business to disabuse his countrymen of the old stock diction and metres, and his *Satire against our Stupid Poets*,² in short brisk verses, is allowed by the Swedes, and may be taken by a foreigner, as a sufficient verdict upon masses of the verse reprinted by Hanselli.

The motley official and political fortunes of Olof von Dalin³ (1708-1763) do not concern us, and the lateness of his literary appearance carries our record further down than is possible in the case of other countries. In 1732 he produced, obscure, anonymous, and single-handed, his *Argus*,⁴ a sheet in somewhat strict imitation of the *Spectator*, with the same plan, the same didactic end, the same wish to cajole and banter society into manners, the same intentness upon ease and suppleness of writing, and much the same machinery. But von Dalin had not Steele's power of drafting or Addison's of finishing

¹ For "Lucidor" and Rutilius, persons of some interest, see Schück, pp. 338-353.

² *Emot vara dumma Poeter*, c. 1720.

³ *Poetiska Arbeten*, Stockh., 1782. Selections in *Valda Skrifter af O. von Dalin*, Örebro, 1872.

⁴ *Then Svenska Argus*; it ran two years.

a character, and he had no urbane prose in his own country either behind him or amongst his contemporaries. But he did what he intended, and his *Tale of the Horse* (*Sagan om Hästen*), which figures the Swedish nation as a steed bestridden by successive riders or kings, from Gustavus to Charles XII., is the best of his prose pieces, and in its genial way is not unsuggestive of Arbuthnot—whom he may have read, as he certainly read Swift. He also wrote a good satirical piece, *Aprilverk*, and a Holbergian comedy, and finally, like Holberg, he compiled a history of his country. Von Dalin latterly became Gallicised, and indicates the revolution of Swedish taste and production. He was an impressible, rather garrulous writer, who unbent and formed his native prose more than any predecessor. His interests were manifold, and he had the power, like Holberg, of educating others, though far less initiative. His interest in philosophy was awakened by his training under the gifted Cartesian, Rydelius, who wrote (as late as 1718) the first serious work in the language on the new philosophy, *The Necessary Uses of Reason*. Von Dalin's contemporary, Helwig Carlotta Nordenflycht, is less noted for any real native power than for her romantic, somewhat *schwärmerisch* life, and for her sensitive subjection, first to the devout school of native hymnologists, and gradually to French verse of the sentimental type. To go further would carry us into the career of Swedenborg, the greatest Swede of the century, who first began to see visions when visiting London in 1743. The significance of all these writers lay less

in themselves than in the break that they implied with the whole preceding literature. No more Latin, no more rhyming hexameters, no more ungainly isolation; for good or otherwise the modern age in Sweden had begun, and when Holberg died in 1754 it was the same in Denmark. The younger disciples of Fru Nordenflycht, Creutz and Gyllenborg, fall too late to be considered here. They are on the brink of the "Gustavan period," when Swedish literature took another decisive turn under the influence of France—but the France rather of Voltaire than of Molière.

In the Dano-Norwegian kingdom secular literature is poor, though not scanty in bulk, until Holberg.

Dansk-norsk: The balance of prestige was decisively assured to Denmark after the creation of the absolute monarchy in 1661, and the Norwegian element in literature and thought was slight or neglected. It was again only reasserted when Holberg (who was certainly quite as much cosmopolitan as Norwegian) redressed the balance. Before him, profane verse is so insignificant that Anders Bording, who died in 1677, remained a celebrity for some little while. Bording's best lines are *Hope Deferred* (1663), wherein he vows to spend his ill-paid pains on smoothing his mother tongue; and three years later he began to indite the first Danish news-sheet; it was upon foreign affairs, and was written in solid enough rhymes. There had been, earlier, some genuine vigour shown in the *Hexämeron*; but Norway produced the most vivid work in the descriptive style. *Nordlands*

Trompet, by Peder Dass,¹ who was partly of Scottish origin, is a rhymed description, in the Draytonian kind, quick, lively, and pedestrian, of Norwegian and Finnish manners.

One memoir, a little classic of its kind, breaks the desert of Danish prose between Vedel and Holberg.

We are with, or beyond, Defoe, when we
Jammersminde. read the *Sorrow's Memorial* (*Jammersminde*) of Leonora² Christina (1621-90), daughter of Christian IV., and wife of a dubious and distinguished personage, Corfitz, Count Ulfeldt. Leonora relates her imprisonment of twenty-one years in the Blue Tower of Copenhagen, at the instance and till the death (1685) of the queen-dowager, Sophia Amalia. An excellent linguist, she also left separate memoirs in French devised to screen Corfitz; but her real stage is the deck of the ship where she was entrapped by the connivance of Charles II. of England, and her reeking apartment in the tower, with its array of ruffianly visitors. She notes the raven that flies over her prison, and believes the omen. She registers as express judgments the wild unseemly deaths of her various persecutors. She defines keenly the blackguardly figures, squalid and screaming, of her jailers and women. She accepts with a strange scorn and gratitude the ribbons and silk-worms sent by the young queen privily and in mortal

¹ Many modern eds., e.g., by A. Erichsen, Christiania, 1892.

² Danish ed., Birket Smith, Copenh., 1885; Eng. tr., F. E. Bunnëtt, London, 1872; archaised German tr. by J. Ziegler Vienna, 1876, ed. 2 (*Denkwürdigkeiten*, &c.)

fear of her savage old mother-in-law. Quick in retort, she only once beats an insolent attendant of her own sex. Now she is dust and ashes, all in God's hands; now, in the taste of the prior age but two, she compiles edifying records of the heroines of history, or writes, somehow, Italian messages on a cake to the old philologist Sperling, who is in the cell below. All this, printed indelibly on a royal memory, is told without rhetoric, in a plain, supple, educated style, tipped with satire, which may be called the first-fruits in Denmark, as Triewald's satires are in Sweden, of the Augustan influence.

But one notable man, the very embodiment of the classical, reasonable age, in its critical and liberating function,—yet going far beyond it in his *Holberg: career*, loud, genial laughter and grasp of common life,—suddenly, without precursors and without disciples, initiated Denmark into the art of writing and the current thought of the world. The work of Ludvig Holberg,¹ who was Norwegian-born (in the cosmopolitan Bergen) in 1684, and died in 1754, is like that of a whole people thirsting to make up the arrears of its progress. The orphan son of a soldier, he was early a student, an observer, and a

¹ Literature very extensive. Jubilee edition of all the comedies, with critical studies, 3 vols., 1884, and popular edition, 1 vol., ed. Liebenberg, 1884, &c.; fifteen chief plays in German by Hoffory and Schleuther, *Die dänische Schaubühne*, Berlin, 1888 (with investigation of sources); twelve plays in R. Prutz, *L. H.'s Ausgewählte Komödien*, Altdorfgauhaus, 1868, 4 parts. See A. Legrelle, *Holberg considéré comme imitateur de Molière*, Paris, 1864. *Memoirs*, Eng. tr. 1826, in *Autobiographies*, &c., London. A few poor English versions of single plays. *Epistler*, ed. Bruun, 1865, &c., 5 vols.

tramp. The English impress upon his mind may have been overestimated, but no doubt Mr Olsvig¹ is right in bringing out its importance. After 1706 he was here; he read Addison, visited Magdalen, and wrote *Spectators* of his own long after. In the appendix to his *History of the European Realms*, 1711, he touches on many things English, from cock-fighting to the constitution. The latter, despite his inclination to Peter the Great and Christian the Fourth, he greatly admired. France, where he went and where he read Bayle hungrily, gave him the probing instinct and a cosmopolitan style. His earlier works are digests of law and history, second-hand in substance, but written with concision, scale, and modernness,—the qualities that Danish letters wanted. Holberg had the true contempt of his school, both for ultimate principles and for philological antiquities; but he earned a livelihood by holding the chairs of Metaphysics and Philology at Copenhagen,—a career which, as Dr Brandes in his *Festskrift*² on Holberg has said, must have kept alive his native sense of irony. In 1719 came out his poem, in rhymed Alexandrines, *Peder Paars*,³ which is still delightful. Its mock-heroic framework is too free, broad, and genial

¹ V. Olsvig, *Det store Vendepunkt i Holbergs Liv* (*The Great Crisis in Holberg's Life*), Bergen, 1895.

² Georg Brandes, *Ludvig Holberg, et Festskrift*, 1884; on the whole the best book on Holberg, and one of the best by its notable author. See too his *L. H. und seine Zeitgenossen*, 1885. Also see F. Winkel Horn, *L. H., en Lærnedsskildring*, 1884; and O. Skavlan, *H. som Komedieforfatter*, 1872. Bibliography by Bruun, 1862.

³ Modern eds., Copenh., 1884 and 1885.

to be quite of the following of the *Lutrin* or the *Rape of the Lock*: it is rather that of the great Italian parodists like Tassoni. And the Northern gust speeds the heavy old metre, like the bark of the exploring bourgeois hero, jauntily along; and Holberg campaigns against the Danes who sneer at Danish, and against the zeal and cant of the devout long-shore community who live by wreckage—a body who might have figured in the later and greater *Peder* of Ibsen—as merrily as against the whole apparatus of gods interposing, Envy personified, epic “flyting,” and stock diction, which burlesques itself in his hands. Many traits in *Peder Paars* are wrought out in Holberg’s comedies, which, at the instance partly of aristocratic friends, poured forth to the number of twenty-two between September 1722 and March 1727. This foundation of a national theatre, in the teeth of the academic and many other derided classes, was cut short by the fire of 1728, and by the pietistic reaction of fifteen years that followed on the accession (in 1730) of Christian VI. Then, amidst some minor flings of satire, such as *Four Poems of Pleasantry* (1722), Holberg resumed his work as universal professor, embittered to redouble with increased *verve* his slighted efforts to drag his country forward. He wrote *Descriptions* of Denmark, of Norway, and of his birthplace, Bergen; a general *Church History*; a *History of the Jews*; and (as professor) the *History of the Danish Kingdom* up to Frederick III. (1732-35). It is the first real book on the subject since Saxo;

and the other works of this class, however second-hand, however lacking in the sense for romance, or for any other age, or for the philosophy of history, are not only among the first serious attempts of their several kinds worth naming in the language, but are genuinely arranged, finished—in a word, *written*. It belongs to the movement whose spirit Holberg drank in that he should slight honourable labourers at detail, like Gram or Syv, as pedants: the comedian's eye for the pedant was too sharp. But he appreciates Torfæus, and in his peroration to the history of the Jews he is seized for once with an epic sense of its greatness. He reveals his own mind more fully, not so much in his *Heroes*, written after Plutarch, as in three of his later publications: his *Life*, first issued in three Latin letters; his *Epistles*, really essays of the serious Addisonian type, but containing thrice the stuff and solidity of Addison's, in Danish; and his Latin prose skit, *Niels Klim*, or *Nikolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum*, 1741.¹ He touches almost every point of contemporary educated thought, though not of the higher speculation. In reasonable tones he adjusts the Lutheran to the critical attitude; his politics are a conglomerate of absolutism and Whiggism, and his greatest aversion is the academic wiseacre, *non polyhistor sed polyhistorio*. He is far beyond his time, and still farther beyond his country, in his handling of witchcraft, which he

¹ A *Journey to the World underground*, from the Latin of Holberg, an Eng. tr. of *Klimius*, 1828. J. Paludan, *Om Holbergs Niels Klim*, 1878, a comparative study of sources.

will not deny to be possible; but of which he shrewdly says, that doubt has acted more to destroy it than the sharpest legal penalties. Klimius, a Lucianic creation, voyages through more lands than Gulliver, and as many as Maeldune; through a Utopia of grave, tolerant, conservative tree-men, by and on whom an innovator is hanged if his bill is thrown out; through Nutak, where vice is cured by a laxative; and Kokletu, where the women woo; until he comes, again like Peer Gynt, to a land where a tail of honour is thrust upon him by the apes,—a grimacing folk in whom Holberg's race-feeling, breaking out, discovers traits of his French hosts. But, though irritatingly pertinent and satiric, he has none of the imperious pain of Swift, or Swift's desire to wound human self-esteem if that be possible; he is at bottom a comedian, holding the view of comedy held by Jonson and Molière, that "*Morale* has two species, the serious and the jocose, and is the most useful science, next to theology" (*Moral Thoughts*, 1744). In his old age, the fame of Holberg, by then (1751) Baron Holberg, was spread abroad; but his humour, reviving in his eleven later plays (after 1747), was too strong for a small and Frenchified generation, and he had to lament his final failure to make the national drama. By hard thrift he became the possessor of independent estate, but lived and worked like a Benedictine, and left books and wealth to found the Sorö academy. His life is one of the most encouraging that we meet with in this age.

The trouble, the complexity that we feel in Molière,

as well as the consciousness of an audience that rang to his touch, and of a language trained by a puissant history, are all absent in Holberg. *Comedies.* And yet, in lucid definition of lesson and character, in his insistence on living humours, in his fashion of laying out the play, Holberg is Molière's greatest disciple in the Franco-Roman type of comedy and farce. His debts are not only to Molière; *Den honnette Ambition* draws from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *The Fidget* (*Den Stundesløse*) from *Le Malade imaginaire*, &c.); but to Molière's *epigoni* like Dancourt, and to Plautus (*Jacob von Tyboe* is on the old *Miles Gloriosus* theme). His odd knowledge even of Wycherley and Farquhar has been duly explored. *Madam Fickle* (*Den Vagtsindede*), with her suits of souls, changed every hour, is a smudged version of Celimène, presented for the gallery. The backward northern nature, the hindered Danish language, are enough in themselves to blunt a number of fine intentions, and a hasty critic might see a certain discord and inadequacy in Holberg's following of his models. But the discord arises from Holberg being at more than one point wider than the classicists, if at others he falls far short of them. He is not a Shakespearian: at least, he has only the atmosphere of Holofernes and Parolles and the *Merry Wives*, not that of meditation and romance. He is nearer Jonson, and is like him in being only half submissive to the ideas of symmetry and measure. His knavish Henriks are of the family of Jonson's Brainworm, rather than of Scapin, who is doubtless their immediate model. Holberg, however, has an intuition

that is all his own both of the common folk and of the class that is just above them and feels too good to associate with them. He shows the muzzy politician who is deceived into thinking himself a functionary, in *The Political Pretence* (*Den politiske Kandstüber*); the travelled Gallicised fop, in *Jean de France*; the student (*Rasmus Berg* or *Erasmus Montanus*), who comes back to the capital from the village, stuffed with bad Latin and worse logic, and is endowed with the single piece of information—which almost loses him his bride and shocks the whole circle—that the world is not flat; the bourgeois gaping for a title, by the fees for which the court filled its exchequer, as in *Don Ramundo* (= *o Du Nary*) *de Colibrados*. This piece Holberg wrote while the plague of titles was still raging, in 1723, but did not venture to produce till the new régime of Frederick V., twenty-three years later; even then he laid the scene in Spain. All these, as well as his richest picture, *Jeppe of the Hill* (*Jeppe paa Bjergst*), on the ancient motive (originally from Bidermann's *Utopia*) of Christopher Sly, show that the material swarming in Holberg's mind could not fully accommodate itself to the classical presentment. But he revenged himself, like Swift, by transcending at other points the strict classical spirit;—by striking back, in two pieces at least, the *Plutus* and the *Ulysses in Ithaca*, if not to Aristophanes, who was once his express model, at any rate to the free Lucianic form of satire, which is itself, through the Renaissance and by rather a circuit, ancestral to the Augustan. So much at least may be said, even if Dr Brandes may be thought to go too far in calling such work “genuine

Renaissance invention, reminding us of the greatest masters, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Rabelais." *Ulysses* is a parody of a certain silly phase of the contemporary imported German drama. Another avenue of escape from classicism into fantasy Holberg owed to his abundant use of the Italian, intriguing, masquerading comedy, represented to him by the collection in Gerhard's *Le Théâtre italien*.¹ His own pieces, for various bad reasons, ceased to be popular in Denmark; but their prosperity during the next half-century, in the Germany of Lessing, is a chapter in itself. Such a man could not fail to leave his trace even on his own country; but he was too great, too wide for what it then was, and his younger contemporaries do not continue him. Yet Christian Falster² (1690-1752), who translated Juvenal and Boileau, and wrote eleven satires, mostly in the short four-line measure, probably between 1720 and 1740, supplements Holberg in more than one amusing way. He describes the typical young Dane, very sore at reading Molesworth's *Account of Denmark* (1694), and calling Molesworth names. Then, in his third satire, on *The Foolish Foreign Journey*, he follows the same youth on his travels to Oxford, where he goes after young women, and at last

¹ Chief among Holberg's other plays are—(1) Intriguing farce: *Mascarade*; and *Henrik og Pernille*; (2) Satire on Danish Manners: *The 11th of June* (*Den ellfte Juni*—the annual fair-day); *The Lying-in Room* (*Burselstuen*, for the benefit of the doctors); *Witchcraft* (*Hæserie*, acted 1750); *The Fortunate Shipwreck* (*Den lykkelige Skibbrud*, with suggestions of *Les Femmes savantes*); (3) of the philosophic type—*Symondelle's Journey to the Philosophical Land*. There are many more.

² *Satirer*, ed., with introduction, by C. Thaarup, 1849.

has to be sent home to his mother by the "Rector," with a certificate that he is under no suspicion of thieving the Bodleian books, and that he has so spent his time that all wonder how he has become so learned. Ambrosius Stub (1705-58), "almost the first Danish poet who tries to sing straight from the heart outside the region of religious verse" (Horn), has in his secular lyrics a devout kind of gaiety which is, after all, like that of the hymn-writers; but he also wrote more than one good drinking-song.

*Holland.*¹

The literary glory of Holland during this period is to be found in her hospitalities; her intellectual glory in her men of science. The asylum of Protestant preachers, the resort of Bayle and Locke, she played a part in the free circulation of ideas that can hardly be over-prized.² The contribution of Dutchmen to positive knowledge was also very great. Jan Swam-

¹ The standard literary history is Dr W. J. A. Jonckbloet's *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letterkunde*, 4th edition by C. Honigh, 6 vols., Groningen, 1890 (vols. iv. and v.) The companion 6 vols., Dr Georg Penon's *Nederlandsche Dicht- en Prozawerken*, of chosen texts, Groningen, 1888, are full and indispensable. German version, by W. Berg, of the earlier and briefer edition of Jonckbloet, Leipzig, 1872, 2 vols. In the Leipzig *Gesch. der Weltliteratur in Einzeldarstellungen*, Hellwald and Schneider's *Gesch. der niederländ. Literatur* is useful and exhaustive. The latest native history, with excellent portraits, facsimiles, &c., is Dr Jan ten Brink's *Geschiedenis der ned. Letterkunde*, Amsterdam (see especially parts 14-17). The few pages in the text are partly a summary from these works.

² See *supra*, pp. 56-58 and 319.

merdam of Amsterdam (1637-1680), the anatomist and observer of insects; Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738), whose *Institutiones medicæ*, 1708, form a system of medicine on a great scale, and who greatly advanced the science of organic chemistry; Anton Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723), the microscopical inquirer, who made an epoch in the theory of animal reproduction, —all these worthily follow the elder and yet more notable Christian Huygens (1629-1693), the inventor of the pendulum clock, the part-discoverer of the polarisation of light, and the expounder of the undulatory theory. Huygens was famed over Europe. But for that reason, like many of his fellows, he became almost more cosmopolitan than Dutch, living in Paris for fifteen years. Latin usually remained the language of these writers, and the same may be said of Spinoza, who belonged to every or to no country, and who falls to an earlier volume than this. A few notes may be added on the native Dutch literature in its moment of decline.

The age of Vondel and his brethren, so rich in drama, in lyric, and in epic, and coincident with the age of national greatness, died slowly down in the last quarter of the century. The last of the race, Antonides van der Goes (1647-84), who wrote some spirited

Antonides. war-songs on the defeat of the Turks, the

nearest work of the time that can be compared to Filicaja's (see p. 393 *post*), delivered a bold and ringing protest against the inroads of Gallicism. In his *Ystroom* (*The River Y*, 1671), descriptive of the life of Amsterdam, and full of genuine pictures,

and in his poem *On the Causes of the National Misfortunes*, Antonides, still touched by the Renaissance taste of allusiveness, laments the power of the French Circe, and compares the inroads of the French spirit and taste, enfeebling and subduing everything, to the insinuation of the wooden horse into Troy. His cry was not unjust; for Gallicism, as we have said, while it was powerful to check and form a literature like the English, which was full of life, could only despatch a literature that was already moribund.

"It can only be ascribed," says Hellwald, "to the influence of the French Protestants, that during forty *French classicism sterile.* years of war with France, and twenty-five years of alliance with England, English literature remained almost unknown in Holland, while everything was modelled on French literature, whose superior perfection soon gave it the preference over native writing." The rage for the translation and imitation of French models began, however, before the great immigration in 1685, if it increased enormously afterwards. The dramatists, especially the tragedians, good and bad, were put into Dutch, and played on all hands. Andries Pels, the chief antagonist of Antonides, had imitated the *Ars Poetica*, and preached the classic unities, as early as 1677. He was also the main founder of the literary society that did most to hasten the final servility of Dutch letters. This body, bearing the title of *Nil volentibus arduum*, occupied itself much with regularising the native drama, and its productions are described as utterly frigid and rhetorical. Such in-

stitutions had much the same palsyng effect as the Italian Arcadia, which came into being (p. 397 *post*) a little later. The illusion in both cases was similar; it was not so much that life and art can be got by mere rules, as that a collective literary effort of art reaches in some way higher than the highest of the individuals concerned in it. But when Antonides and the older survivors had deserted, the society became a mere addition of ciphers, and the effect of this and like vanities lasted in Holland for many generations. The historians, until the rise of Justus van Effen, who took his inspiration from England, find little to record except the few talents who were untouched by Gallicism and saved from the wreck.

A few of these can be shortly registered. The most promising of the lyric poets towards the end of the century was the engraver Joan Luyken (1649-1712), whose volume of *Duytse Lir* came out in 1671. After this charming collection, issued in early youth, Luyken retired into the devout life, and only wrote dull and edifying verse. His early songs are for the most part frank pieces of paganism, not unlike Herrick's in tone, though much less various and exquisite. Some have a fresh and pastoral sound, sometimes they are pure pieces of gallantry. It has been seen how the lyric of nature never wholly dried up in England, even when the city literature was in its height; but we should hardly expect to find the nearest parallels in the poorest of all contemporary literatures. A poet later than Luy-

*Luyken and
Poet.*

ken was Hubert Corneliszoon Poot (1689-1732), the ploughman of Delft, who also did his work in early youth. Poot sang with fluent sincerity, in easy speech and measure, the happiness of his lot. He has no height or fire, but a plain, pleasant devoutness and contentment; and he was long uncritically exalted, so great was his contrast with the usual verse of his time. His little lyric on the death of his infant child Jacoba has a finish and pathos like Hood's.

Romance and drama, though profuse, have left little that is of inoderate historical interest. There is one noted and popular picaresque romance, *Two comedians*. Nicolaas Heinsius's *The Sportive Adventurer* (*Den vermakelijken Avonturier*, 1695).¹ There are also two comedians of native manners, who seem to have repeated, in a lower walk of interest and with less style, the work of Dancourt or Vanbrugh. The first of these, Thomas Asselijn (1620?-1701), wrote a number of farces and at least one superior piece, *Jan Klaaszen, or the Disguised Serving-maid* (1682), a bright and irresponsible low comedy of manners. In the next generation, the comic talent was almost confined to Pieter Langendijk (1683-1756), who helped to translate *Cato*, and wrote farces and one or two genuine comedies of citizen character. The best of these is pronounced to be *The Mirror of our Merchants* (*Spiegel der vaderlandsche Koopluden*), which relates how the

¹ See Jan ten Brink's *Geschiedenis*, pp. 502-505, and his monograph (Rotterdam, 1885) on *Dr Nicolaas Heinsius, Jr.*—the vagabond descendant of a line of scholars.

tables are turned upon a couple of prodigal sons by their thrifty and despised parents, who secretly buy up their debts, reduce them to despair, and then relieve them on strict conditions.¹ Among the numerous other writers of the period, by far the most interesting for the story of classicism is the renovator of Dutch prose, Justus van Effen² (1684-1735). Like Holberg, van Effen came to England in the midst of the vogue of Addison. He paid two visits to London, in 1714 and 1727, as secretary to the Dutch ambassador. He translated French, and even carried on a weekly journal in that language. He put *Robinson Crusoe* and Mandeville into Dutch. It

Van Effen, the Spectator, and prose.

was not till 1731 that he began his principal venture, *De Hollandsche Spectator*. This work, which continued for nearly four years, was strictly modelled on the English pattern. Its design of reforming manners and conversation is the same; its baits are the same—incessant variety, shortness, popular ease of style. The tone is prevailingly didactic, though not nearly so heavy as that of the German journalists. Van Effen has some really charming idyllic pictures and dialogues of citizen courtship and pleasantry. He fulfils his programme of writing urbanely and easily, and his influence, on its own scale, truly resembled Addison's. But in his reforming earnestness, which he cannot help betraying, and in his warmth of feel-

¹ On Alewijn, Foequenbroch, and other playwrights, see Jonckbloet, bk. iii. ch. iv., and Jan ten Brink, p. 507 sq.

² A *Biographical* of 81 papers, ed. A. Stellwagen, Groningen, 1889.

ing, he is more like Steele. To pass to him from a book like Geeraerd Brandt's *Life of de Ruyter* (1687)¹ is almost like passing from Hakluyt to Steele; and the illustration may show that Holland, though more obscurely and on a poorer scale, shared in the general movement of classicism, if greatly to its loss, yet here and there not without compensation.

¹ See excerpts from Brandt in Penon, *op. cit.*, vol. v. p. 310.

CHAPTER VIII.

ITALY ¹ AND THE PENINSULA.

ITALY : ITALIAN LEARNING CRITICAL—SCIENCE AND LETTERS : MAGALOTTI AND REDI—OTHER PROSE : DATI AND SEGNERI—VERSE : ANTI-MARINISM ; THREE KINDS : 1, MOCK-EPICS, LIPPI—2, SATIRE, MENZINI AND OTHERS—3, PATRIOTIC ODES, GUIDI AND V. DA FILICAJA—METRES AND MINOR VERSE—THE ARCADIA : ITS HISTORY, ITS AIMS AND PATTERNS—INSTANCES OF GALLICISM—LITERARY THEORY : GRAVINA.

SPAIN : THE MENTAL AWAKENING LATE ; FEYJÓO—DECAY OF VERSE—MOLINOS'S 'GUIDE'—GALLICISM AFTER 1700—REVIEWING ; SATIRE AND POETIC : LUZÁN.

PORTUGAL : GENERAL NOTE—THE PORTUGUESE NUN—CLASSICISM.

BETWEEN the death of Campanella in 1639 and the first notable work of Vico (1708-1710) no highly original impulse is to be seen in Italian philosophy. The Cartesian quarrels crossed the Alps ; but what with the rule of the Church and other causes they founded no powerful movement of rationalism. Yet, in return, Italy remained a land of scholars and historical

¹ *Histories of Literature.* The fullest and best is *Storia letteraria d'Italia, scritta da una Società di Professori*, Milan (Vallardi) ; e.g., *Il Seicento*, by A. Belloni, and *Il Settecento*, by T. Concari, are in progress (bibliographies not yet out). *Il Seicento*, by B. Morsolin, in the previous *Storia lett.*, ed. Villari, and also published by Vallardi (Milan,

diggers. The Cartesian distaste for the study of the past was not strong enough to hinder, and the generation of Sarpi, the great historian, was succeeded by one of knowledge and research. There were many Greek and Hebrew scholars of worth, and the study of Italian antiquities was eagerly prolonged. The foundation was now laid for the greater period of Italian learning, that of Muratori and Giannone and Gravina, who flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century. Vico, the first man to grasp the philosophy of history in one powerful synthesis, belongs to the same time. On these writers it is not proposed to trespass, save only to note their sallies into literary theory. If Italian learning, even before their coming, did not remain uncritical, as might have been feared in default of a strong rationalistic current, and if the learned age was better guided than in the German

1880, &c.), is good, but now hard to obtain. The third vol. (1897) of D'Ancona and Bacci's *Manuale della Letteratura italiana*, 5 vols., Florence, gives extracts, with excellent short notices and references to bibliography. The older work of Corniani, *I secoli della Lett. ital.*, is still useful, especially for minor names, though not up to date; and the historians Settembrini and Cantù may also be consulted, as well as the first good literary history in modern times, Tiraboschi's. The well-known *Storia della Lett. ital.* of Francesco de Sanctis (2 vols., Naples, 1879, &c.) is full of insight and power, though at times prejudiced. Isidoro Carini's *L'Arcadia dal 1690 al 1890* (Rome, 1891, &c.), though written with a wish to glorify the Arcadia, gives convenient lives and descriptions of nearly all the writers named in this chapter. For texts, there is the great collection of *Classici Italiani*, 374 vols., Milan, 1804-1850, referred to here as *C. I.*; and the smaller *Parnaso Italiano*, 56 vols., Venice, 1784-91, of verse and drama, collected by Andrea Rubbi, referred to here as *P. I.* There are short general sketches in English of Italian literature by F. J. Snell (Oxford, 1893) and R. Garnett (1898).

lands, salvation came doubtless, at least in part, from the example of physical science and its methods. For science was another honour of Italy during this period, and one note of Italian science was its union with poetry and style.

Galileo died in 1642, and Torricelli, the inventor of the barometer, a little later. In 1657 was founded the Accademia del Cimento, or Academy of Experiment, with its motto "provando e riprovando la natura,"—"test nature, and test her twice." This body, more purely scientific in its plan than the Royal Society, included one of the masters of modern anatomy, Marcello Malpighi (1628-1694), and was largely founded by Vincenzo Viviani, a considerable geometrician and the biographer of Galileo. Viviani, like the astronomer Gian Domenico Cassini, is heard of in the annals of Chapelain and the Académie des Sciences. Many of the scientific Italians are of the encyclopedic and Renaissance type, and combine the best traits of the humanist with the spirit of ordered inquiry. Alessandro Marchetti, a mathematician, made a much-praised Italian translation of Lucretius, and others of parts of Virgil, Anacreon, and Politian. Again, Lorenzo Bellini (1643-1704), another anatomist and physiologist of note, had a strain of the poet and fantast, and wrote a wild mock-epic, *La Bucchereide*, on some varieties of odorous earth. In two other figures the trait of universality is still more marked.¹ Of Lorenzo

¹ R. Caverni, *Storia del Metodo sperimentale in Italia*, Florence, 1891.

Magalotti¹ (1637-1712) it may be said that he knew much in spite of knowing almost everything. He was an orientalist; he belonged to the Royal Society and the Accademia della Crusca, he translated into Italian fragments of *Paradise Lost*, the *Psalms*, Saint-Evremond, and Waller's *Bermudas* and *Cyder*; published the most famed experiments of the Accademia del Cimento (of which he was secretary) and a number of scientific letters, in a Tuscan that is pronounced classical; and, just in the manner of Ray or Fénelon, produced a series of epistles usually entitled *The Atheist Convinced*. Magalotti also commented on Dante, and wrote with grace and precision.

In Francesco Redi,² of Arezzo (1626-1698), humanism, style, and science interpenetrate. Redi took his degree in medicine at Pisa, where he also
and Redi. spent his latter days; but for most of his life he was chief physician to successive grand-dukes of Florence. His works on medicine, natural history, and the invention of lenses earned him his title both as a discoverer and a writer. In one of his prefaces he pleads, in Baconian rather than Cartesian strain, for the rights of scientific observation and reason; weak as it may be, he says, reason can only see through the windows of the senses. Redi was also a wide linguist, with some knowledge of Greek and

¹ *Saggi*, reprinted 1841; *Varie Operette*, Milan, 1825; *Lettere famigliari*, Florence, 1769.

² *Opere*, 7 vols., Venice, 1712-30; *C. L.*, vols. 169-177; *Poesie Toscane*, Florence, 1822. &c., and in *P. L.*, vols. 40, 41.

Arabic, and a critical interest in the Italian dialects. He was eminent in the Accademia della Crusca and other learned bodies, and lectured at Florence on rhetoric to several of the younger poets. Of these was Filicaia, whose patriotic odes he greets in terms that might be too much for the most callow appetite. "If one of the noblest prophets of the Old Testament had had to converse with God on an affair resembling that of the siege of Vienna, he could not have done it more majestically, or with more saintly and befitting lowliness." The praise compares with that lavished on Montepulcian wine in Redi's chief poem, *Bacco in Toscana*. This is known in England chiefly through Leigh Hunt's scraps of translation, which have uncommon spirit, but also a kind of smirking, ungirt familiarity that is not in the original. Redi began with the right streak of madness; it is present in the curvetting and prancing rhythms, which gradually swagger into a gallop as Bacchus chants to Ariadne his praise and blame of the Italian vintages and his scorn of all tame liquors. Redi published this piece in 1685, and ran into some danger of over-writing it. He packed it with remote dialectal words, with intensives and diminutives, and with learned annotations. He was a serious spirit, and his Platonising sonnets have noble sallies. But for good and ill he kept his seriousness out of his dithyramb. Bacchus does no more than get endlessly and cheerfully drunk; he has no soul to toss for sacrifice into the wine-cup, like Herrick in his *Parting from Poetry*. Redi also wrote, by way of comic counterblast to

himself, a temperance ode, *Arianna inferna*, which it is said that advancing age and numerous affairs prevented him from finishing.

One or two writers, remarkable in other tracts of prose, can be mentioned. Carlo Roberto Dati¹ (1619-1676) recalled the best traditions in his *Other prose: Dati and Segneri. Vite de' Pittori antichi* (namely Zenxis, Parrhasius, Apelles, and Protogenes), in his *Raccolta* of Florentine authors, and in his letters. When he is not praising Louis XIV., who gave him a pension, his style is usually sober and plain, touched with grace, and quit of the shapeless ebullience that has often been one of the curses of Italian prose. Dati, like other sound writers of his time and land, got his literary self-control straight from the classics, and not through the medium of Augustan taste and theory. The same praise cannot be offered to one of the most eminent of Italian preachers, the Jesuit Paolo Segneri² (1624-1694), though he is far more free than some of his contemporaries from points and sham graces. Segneri wrote much, but his panegyrics of saints and martyrs, his *Quaresimale*, or course of Lenten Sermons, and his tract *L'Incredulo senza Senso*, may be taken to give the measure of his powers. Despite his wearisome emphasis, he went straight to the source of oratory, to Cicero; and he acquired some of the order, the lucidity, and the splendour of his pattern. He is full of spacious fig-

¹ *Scelta di prose*, Venice, 1826. *Vite* in *C. L.*, vol. 203.

² *Opere*, 3 vols., Florence, 1811-50. *Panegyrics*, tr. Humphrey, London, 1897; *The Manna of the Soul*, London, 1892.

ures and illustrations like Bossuet, and he has vision. When he compares the pioneers of gospel truth to the first crew of Argonauts that ventured on ship-board, the whole picture of the imploring crowds, the receding vessel, and the farewells, is dilated with vivid Italian copiousness and gesture. Segneri was a remarkable player on the passions of the faithful, though he does not reason like his French brethren, and compared with Bourdaloue he does not know what measure means. There is no space to enumerate professors of academic eloquence like Salvini, or travellers like Francesco Gemelli-Carreri, whose faithful descriptions of his voyages both to East and West were put into English in the eighteenth century.

Italian verse, like French and English, had long declined from the large and various inspiration of the late sixteenth century. It demanded
Verse: Anti- renovation from a false and impossible
Marinism: taste. Marino, who perverted a very genuine talent, had justly given his name to the decline, and Marinism was in some measure a source of infection to other countries. In the preceding volume of this series the generic vices and affectations of Cartwright, of Chapelain, and of writers like Achillini and Preti find their record. The scattered beginnings of the literary protest came early in Italy also. In the second satire of the painter Salvator Rosa,¹ published late in the century, but written before 1650,

¹ Cp. G. C. Bufardecì, *La Reazione contro il Scicento nelle Satire di S. Rosa e B. Menzini*, Ragusa, 1897.

there is a vigorous protest on behalf of good form and good sense against the besetting vices of "bold figures and metaphors, bombastic words, and dark sayings, conceits harsh or vilely phrased, and mutilation of the language." Rosa himself, if not free from diffuseness and declamation, was an honest irritable moralist and a genuine artist. He was only one of many who, by satire, by burlesque, or by criticism, attempted to renew and liberate Italian letters. Classicism came here also, but it took a special turn. The concerted effort of the Arcadia, the official voice of the literary reform, was begun in 1690, a quarter of a century after the change was announced in France and England; and when it came it was singularly uninspired for another quarter of a century. But before the Arcadia there were signs of vitality and reform in Italian verse, and three distinct kinds may be cited in illustration—the burlesque epic, the satire, and the heroic ode.

The burlesque epic¹ in Italy was a form of the best ancestry and standing, striking back to Berni and

1. *Mock-epics*, Pulci. Tassoni's *Secchia rapita* (1622) Lippi.

had kept alive the tradition of the long genial poem, which was a parody partly of the chivalrous style, and partly of the chivalrous ideas and incidents. The framework, common to many of his successors, of a contest between two hot-blooded cities for some object of small value, a bucket, an old ruin, the bolt of the city gates, also

¹ For full accounts see Belloni, *op. cit.*, cap. iv., *Il poema eroico-comico*.

permitted of a good deal of serious and heroic interlude; and in that way genuine epic was used as a relief to burlesque. The works of this kind were numerous, and kept appearing till late in the century. The intention of social or moral satire is not prominent, and there is no Italian *Hudibras*. The author, for instance, of *Malmantile racquistata* (1676), Lorenzo Lippi¹ (died 1664), showed no trace of Butler's desire to pillory the old philosophical ideas so long as they had yet a little life in them. The recapture of the castle of Malmantile is the object of a series of pantomime wars, carried on partly by beings that are labelled human, partly by comic devils and witches, through the space of twelve books. The interest is that of sheer bottomless buffoonery, and the author's intention to show "the reverse of the medal" of the heroic poem is outdone by the performance. But the book, although difficult to read, owing to its masses of Florentine slang and *patois*, is very lively. Experiments of this kind continue late, and perhaps the most curious are the *Ricciardetto* of Fortiguerra, an immense improvised comic poem, and the continuation of the old sixteenth-century piece of Cesare Croce, *Bertoldo e Bertoldino*, by a syndicate of elegant Arcadians. Both productions are well over the brink of the eighteenth century. It is clear how all this differed as far from the mockeries of Boileau and Butler as from those of Holberg.

After Rosa, the nearest approach to the classical

¹ Re-edited, Florence, 1861; and *P. L.*, vol. 37.

forms of satire is to be found in Benedetto Menzini¹ (1646-1704), a Florentine, an ecclesiastic, 2. *Satire, Mœzini and others.* and at first a disappointed and struggling teacher. Menzini's lyrical pieces, published in 1680, are varied. His anacreontics are full of grace and dexterity, and one of his sonnets, on the omens of the approach of rain, shows a delicate alertness to nature. But these works prepare us ill for the thirteen satires, published collectively long after his death. Menzini's fortunes turned when he left in 1685 for Rome. Thanks to the favour of Queen Christina, of two popes, and of various academies, he ended in a prosperous canonry. The satires are the discharge of his earlier rage and disappointment, and of his genuine and angry scorn of the world in which he had lived. They are concentrated and waspish, strangely packed with fragments both of Dante and of popular speech, and they do not spare individuals. Menzini follows the vehement and Juvenalian style, as Rosa had tried to speak in the lower and more natural pitch of Horace. He is sometimes a blind hitter, but he gives the impression of power and sincerity. His interludes of serious and lofty verse are singularly worthy of a disciple of Dante and Tasso. Bigotry and hypocrisy are the chief of his foes; the great man's antechamber, with the starveling poet awaiting audience, the Gallicised foppery of dress, the vanity and expense of women, are all handled with

¹ *Satire, Rime, e Lettere scelte*, Florence, 1874. Satires also in *P. L.*, vol. 40; and *Raccolta di Poesie satiriche*, London, 1780, &c., vol. 7; vol. 3 of the same has Sergardi (in Italian), vol. 1 Rosa, vol. 6 Adinami.

the same deadly intention. The *Arte Poetica* of Menzini is largely an attack upon contorted language and other vices of *secentismo*. The Latin satires of Lodovico Sergardi, or "Quintus Sectanus," were circulated long before their publication in 1696, and are extraordinary for their rank vigour, which is mainly exercised with frantic injustice at the expense of Gravina. Nothing can exceed the gross loud impudence of the fifteenth satire, in which Sergardi, posing as an adherent of modern science, goes down to hell, and is supported by the shades of Galileo and Malpighi in his attack on the Schools. Finally Cicero enters holding the legal treatise of Gravina, and derides its Latin. Sergardi had power and style worthy of a more decent feud. The five Italian pieces of Lodovico Adimari (1644-1708) are mostly impersonal and correct in form, lengthy and often flat, but with sonorous patches of declamation. On the whole, Italy ranks high in this kind of verse, and her classical inspiration is strong, independent, and direct.

In one kind of lyric, the heroic *canzone* or ode, the Italians have excelled all modern peoples; and the line of patriot or triumphal verse which
 3. *Patriotic*
Odes, Guidi stretches from Dante to Carducci was not broken in the seventeenth century. In England the best odes are elegiac; the *Annus Mirabilis*, though it contains the true military note, is not an ode; and it would be hard to cite any contemporary odes that can be named in the same breath with Chiabrera's or Guidi's, to say nothing of Filicaia. Chiabrera died in 1638, so that only the two latter poets concern us.

Alessandro Guidi¹ (1650-1712) is a master of the form and sound of the heroic ode, if not of its more solemn and passionate effects. He deserted the strict recurrent strophe, six or seven times repeated, of the usual canzone, for a free irregular system, and though his metrical example was not widely followed at the time, it was taken up long afterwards by Leopardi and with unapproached power. Guidi was born at Pavia, and produced his first volume of lyric in 1681, whilst at the court of Parma. But many of the best of his odes centre on the glories of Queen Christina, whose poet and client he became from 1685 till her death four years later. During these years he also produced a curious musical masque, in honour of the accession of James II. Thames and London greet the monarch in answering strains, and the voice of "Genio Ribelle" is decisively quelled. In 1688 came an indignant lament over the crimes committed by England against the Stuart dynasty and the Catholic faith. The ode on the death of Christina is very much finer. The best and most famed of Guidi's *canzoni* is addressed to Fortune. It is grandiose, sounding, classical, allusive, and strained high. Guidi had the self-confidence of an Elizabethan, and compared his own verse, in respect of its eternity, to that of Pindar. He is remembered for his metrical power and the nobility of his intention. His sonnet on Michel Angelo's *Last Judgment* is much more interesting than his numerous complimentary pieces in honour of the Arcadia.

Ed. Francesia, 1872; and in *P. L.*, vol. 42.

Vincenzio da Filicaia,¹ the chief Italian poet of his generation, was the son of a Florentine senator, and was born in 1642. A pupil of Redi, he and V. da Filicaia, was soon distinguished for strenuous culture, and graduated Doctor of Laws at Pisa. But his early life was somewhat unprosperous, in part owing to a disappointment in love. This he calls his "great and terrible shipwreck," and it is reported to have led him to abjure all subjects "save such as were heroic, sacred, or moral." The pleasing pieces of lighter verse that he preserved make us regret his decision; but in his own belief, he tells us, "the death of my hopes brought back freedom to my heart." He married, and lived somewhat meagrely, until he was discovered and favoured by Christina. Filicaia revealed himself in 1683. The ruling passions of his verse were Italy and the faith, and they were both kindled by the resistance of the allied princes to the inverted crusade of the Turks. The siege of Vienna, and its subsequent relief, inspired the two stateliest of his *canzoni*, and, like Leopardi, he won his first fame by patriotic verse. In these odes, and in the accessory ones addressed to the various leaders of the league, Filicaia spoke from the soul, and well merited his honours as the accepted laureate of the Christian triumph. The crash of Eastern names, the pictures of the desolate

¹ *Poesie Toscane*, Venice, 2 vols. 1812; and Florence, 1823. *Poesie e Lettere* (selection), Florence, 1864; *P. I.*, vol. 41. The style "Filicaia" is easier and better accredited to English ears, though "Da Filicaia" is correct.

capital, of the gathering of the rescuers, of the scattering of the paynim—

“ I saw the standards tremble
And shields ; I saw the flickering scimitars
Of the East in hosts assemble ;
And as men fevered in their dreams half-rise,
And rising fall, in visionary wars,
And breathless agonise,
So powerless sank, and backward broke, our enemies ;”

—all this is too magnificent not to survive a few lapses into declamation. The *canzoni* were published in Florence in 1684. Filicaia became famous; he was preferred to governorships at Volterra and Pisa, and latterly to posts in Florence. He went on writing, and the volume of his verse, including that written in Latin, is of some bulk. He lost one of the sons to whom he addressed his touching if rather hortatory odes. He died in 1707; and there is a curious token of his foreign repute in an enthusiastic letter from the famous Whig magnate, Lord Somers. His *Poesie Toscane* were collected and brought out by his son in the same year.

Filicaia enjoyed an overweening fame, until some of the best modern critics fell without mercy on the emphatic and rhetorical elements in his verse. Nor can it fairly be denied that at his worst he falls into something like a battering and brazen clamour. But then so does Gray; and yet the odes of Gray wear well. The parallel, indeed, is not remote between the *Progress of Poesy* and the *canzone*, *La Poesia*. The Muse, appearing to the poet, relates how in the dark

ages she fell on silence, and only a gleam of obscure renown remained to her when she heard the barbarous tongues that descended on Italy. "But as a rough pollarded trunk, if a graft of gentle stock is married to it, becomes gentle once more, and is wed to fruits and flowers that are not its own, so the noble old Ausonian speech was grafted on the barbarous jargon, and from this common parentage was born the sweet idiom on which the land sets its just price." In the day of Dante and Petrarch the Muse decked her hair with Tuscan laurel that grew alike from the Greek and the Roman tree. Then, at the revival, came those others whose speech strove with and partly matched the antique, and then the decayed age of wanton verse and the servile imitators. From this overture the poem declines into a hymn to Christina, "whose realm is all that hath thought, pains, or purpose." It is little to say that the sonnets on Italy, written later, and the ode *E pare, Italia*, are mostly clear of declamatory weakness. The sonnet, *Italia, Italia* is known to thousands of English readers in Byron's translation, or rather transversing (*Childe Harold*, iv. 42, 43). These and the Vienna poems, despite any shortcoming, stand with or near Dante's *O patria degna*, Chiabrera's *Quando il pensiero umano*, and Leopardi's *O patria mia*. A foreigner is ill fitted to discriminate points of form, but the ardent and insuperable spirit of all these pieces needs no assertion and brooks no denial. Filicaia's religious poems, which are numerous, intermix a kind of Platonism with their lofty Catholic piety.

Here also, in his higher flights, he works himself free of coldness and fashion into authentic power.

The kind of poems that have here been noticed keep as a rule to their traditional and allotted metres.

*Metres and
minor verse.*

The epic parody is usually in the heroic octave (*ottava rima*); but it also tends to run into the dithyramb, the *capriccio*, or the *scherzo*; which often are in irregular galloping rhymes, crowded with triple or slippery endings (*rime sdruciole*), and with augmentatives and diminutives. The satires are mostly in *terza rima*; the *canzone*, except in the hands of Guidi, remains regular and strophic; while sundry measures of *canzonetta* and madrigal are freely used, and anticipate the free chanting measures of the musical melodrama. A very large proportion of the remaining verse of this period — certainly almost all that yet claims reference — is in the sonnet form. The spiritual and civic strain of Filicaia was often heralded or echoed. Carlo Maria Maggi¹ (1630-99), the author of several comedies in his native Milanese dialect, who modestly describes his own verse as “not a great wine, but drinkable withal,” rises in two of his sonnets to the sterner tones; and as much may be said of a few others by Alessandro Marchetti, the translator of Lucretius. At the close of the century the honour of lyric was kept alive by the two Zappis. Giovan Battista Zappi, of Imola, besides producing much pastoral and mawkish matter, celebrated the defeat of the

¹ *Rime varie*, 4 vols., Milan, 1700. Selection, Pisa, 1793. The Zappis, in *P. L.*, vol. 12.

Turks like the rest; but in his three sonnets on the Moses of Michel Angelo, on Judith, and on Lucretia, he rose to the level of his wife, Faustina Maratti-Zappi. She struck the heroic chord in her sonnet ending

“Italia, Italia, sei reina ancora”;

her two pieces on the death of her son are pathetic and clear; and these, equally with her series on Portia and other Roman heroines, sound strangely alive amidst the multitudinous strummings and flatulent pipings of the average Arcadian.

The once famous factory of verses, known as the Arcadia,¹ was opened in October 1690, at Rome, in *The Arcadia: the gardens of the Franciscan Fathers, its history*, at San Pietro in Montorio on the Janiculum. In origin it was a memorial to the great Christina, the shelterer of men of letters, and the head, or figurehead, of Italian culture. She had died the year before, but had long striven to give some form and guidance to the scattered forces of literature. The idea of an academy, or authorised society, supreme in matters of taste, was congenial enough to her travelled and Gallicised mind. She had already started a kind of philosophical club, and many of its members now reassembled to honour her memory by a collective effort for the reform of Italian writing. The original register of fourteen that met in 1690

¹ See Carini, *L' Arcadia*, already cited; and Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, London, 1880, for the scenery and personalities of the Arcadia. Concari, *op. cit.*, ch. i.

included Zappi, Gravina, and Giovan Mario Crescimbeni, later the "Custode generale" and complaisant historian of the society. The Arcadia enlarged, grew in authority, multiplied its colonies, and at last included almost every mind of note in Italy. It is needless to give minutes here of its complicated machineries and mummeries; of the pastoral titles that invested its members—the three writers just named were called Tirsi Leucasio, Opico Erimanteo, and Alfesibeo Cario;—or to relate how the two latter shepherds intrigued for the custodianship; or what Latin rules were drawn up; or even what tomes of miscellaneous and usually third-rate *rime* were issued with the approval of the body during the next forty years. The programme and characteristic work of the Arcadia was much narrower than its roll of members might suggest. Filicaja and Menzini, Bellini and Averani, were absorbed into the corporation, paid their toll of compliment and pastoral, and assented to the common articles of criticism; but they are not therefore remembered as Arcadians. The aims of the reformers admit of narrower description.

The Arcadia differed in several points from the analogous bodies elsewhere. It came late, when the French Academy and the Royal Society *Its aims and patterns.* had outlived their earlier ideals. It was more centralised and pompous than the contemporary Dutch societies of the kind, its ramifications were more organised, its hostilities were somewhat different. Like the rest, it declared for the reform of diction and the purging of style; it was all for nature,

simplicity, and clearness. It detested alike conceits and emphasis, Marinism and Pindarism; and almost the same faults were scouted in France and England after 1660. But in Italy the effort to be quit of these things took the form of a revival of the earlier native poetry—a trait that finds only a partial analogy in England, and in France no analogy at all. And it was a revival at two removes. The Arcadians nominally went back for their patterns to the old masters, especially Petrarch. But instead of going freely to Petrarch and Dante, or to antiquity, they went back to writers like Angelo di Costanzo, a Petrarchan of the sixteenth century, to other Platonisers and sonnet-crafters of the same time, and to the pastoralist Sannazzaro, from whose famed *Arcadia* they may have taken their name and some affectations. Erotic subtleties, shepherd gallantries, all the conventions that had long come to a natural end, were now resuscitated—a curious enough spectacle in the full vogue of classicism. The natural consequence followed. During the first generation of the Arcadia, which may be taken to reach to the outer limits of our survey, the curse of elegant collective mediocrity is over nearly all the accredited production of the school. Later it developed some original talents, and during the next century it is much identified with the whole history of Italian letters.

Instead of enumerating those versifiers who are a little better than the others, it is convenient
Instances of here to state the chief forms, old and new,
Gallicism. that were favoured upon the rise of the Arcadia.

There were the pseudo-pastoral in its traditional varieties—dramatic, bucolic, elegiac; there were the teeming laudations and occasional poems, which sometimes fell into the pastoral form, but sometimes into that of the ode; there were Platonising sonnets and *canzoni*. But besides all these, in which there was little fresh life to be found, two distinct strains may be noted. (1) The influence of French classicism came late; it was somewhat scattered and crossed with other elements, but it came. Amid much tasteless matter, we come suddenly on fables of La Fontaine adapted with singular gaiety and impetus by Tommaso Crudeli (died 1743); upon the rendering of *Le Tartuffe* by Girolamo Gigli¹ of Siena, whose *Don Pilone, ovvero il Bacchettone falso* (*The False Hypocrite*), with its lyrical interludes, is full of excellent wild spirits and broad anti-clericalism. Gigli also worked up *Scapin*, and wrote an original comedy, *La Sorellina di Don Pilone*, which is a gay and yet a drastic study of squalid and discomfited avarice. Racine was translated and imitated, and the *Merope* of Maffei (1713) opened the rule of classic tragedy, and ran through a European reputation until the time of Lessing. But (2) the real bent of Italian drama was lyrical, and the musical melodramas of Metastasio, which have certain forerunners and beginnings in our period, fall distinctly to the next, like the lyrics of Rolli, and the manifold verse of Frugoni, and Goldoni's comedies, and, later still, the satires of Parini.

¹ Gigli's two plays in *C. L.*, vol. 347; Crudeli's fables, *ib.*, vol. 346.

The eighteenth century in Italy soon became an age of critical erudition and synthesis, of which only some firstfruits can be mentioned. The Arcadia, though its programme was not truly intellectual, counted the chief names of Italian learning, and at least one judge of literature who opened a new life for æsthetic theory. Such, indeed, is not the praise of Lodovico Antonio Muratori,¹ the chief antiquarian of Europe, whose collection of the early Italian chronicles, as well as his own famed *Annali* of his country, came out in the second quarter of the century. His treatise *Della perfetta Poesia* (1706) is not quite as blank a repetition of the battered old formulæ—truth, imitation, good taste—as we find in contemporary Swiss or Germans. The true pioneer was the jurist Gian Vincenzo Gravina² (1664-1718), whose *Origines Juris civilis* (1701-8) belongs to the philosophic histories of law. Gravina was not successful as a versifier, but his appreciation of Greek, Latin, and Italian poetry was nicer and wider than that of any critic recorded in this book. Despite some traits of pedantry and self-sufficiency, he was touched with a spirit that bore him far from the classicism of his school and set. His chief treatises are (1692) on Guidi's *Endimione*; *Della Ragion poetica* (1708); and *Della Tragedia* (1715). He starts from the rule of reason, the mixture of delight and profit in

¹ Æsthetic works in *C. I.*, vols. 288, 289.

² P. Emiliani-Giudici, *Prose di G. Gravina*, Florence, 1857 (the æsthetic works, with introduction). See the judicious study by E. Reich, *Gravina als Æsthetiker*, in the issues of the Vienna *Kaiserliche Acad. der Wissenschaften*, 1890.

poetry, and the following of nature. But he is saved from the usual consequences of these axioms by a powerful infusion of noble Platonism. The eternal idea—that is the thing to imitate! Its likeness is printed on things, like the mould on the wax; and the poetic faculty, which spans “the whole immense space of the real and the likely,” is its discoverer. The ultimate end of art is “the good of the intellect”; and poetry, while on one side revealing the rational essence of things, on another is “an enchantress, but for our good—a fever that purges madness.” Gravina’s somewhat frigid reproductions of the Greek theory of tragedy may be forgotten in his sagacious praise of Pindar, Sophocles, Lucretius, Dante, and Ariosto; and his formula of “imitation” becomes alive again through the turn that he gives to it: “It is easy to see what men should be, but hard and obscure to discern what they are.” Probably there is no eighteenth century critic before Lessing who gives the same impression of power and freedom. “Italian classicism,” it has been well said, “has ever been much freer, more varied, less conventional, less stiff and stickling, and, in a word, more poetical and less oratorical than French classicism.”¹

The Peninsula.

Only a note can be added on the belated part that was played by the Western Peninsula in the history

¹ Menéndez y Pelayo, *Ideas estéticas en España*, vol. iii. pt. i. p. 331 (1886).

of mind and letters. The chronicle is familiar to English readers in the *History* of Ticknor,¹ which has long been an honour both to Spain and his own country. Mr Hammay's volume in the present series has brought down the record of the great age to its extinction late in the seventeenth century. The whole of the eighteenth is taken up with the late, slow, and half-baffled efforts to bring Spanish thought and art up to the level of contemporary Europe, or even of Europe in the "Augustan" age. The national decay during the painful reign of Charles II., who died in 1700; the exchange of the House of Austria for the House of Bourbon, with the accession of Philip V.; the delays caused by the War of Succession, and the relapse of Spain into an inferior power; the

¹ George Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature* (fourth edition, 3 vols., Boston, 1872) has been translated into Spanish and annotated. The present period is handled in vol. iii. The poetry and criticism are discussed minutely by the standard authority, Don Leopoldo Augusto de Cueto (Marqués de Valmar), in his *Bosquejo histórico-crítico de la Poesía castellana en el Siglo xviii.* (*Historical and critical Sketch*), last separate edition, Madrid, 1893. This first came out (1869), preceding the 3 vols. that contain *Poetas Vricos del Siglo xviii.* and form vols. 61-63 of Rivadeneyra's great *Biblioteca de Autores españoles* (Madrid, various dates). The short English *History of Spanish Literature*, by H. Butler Clarke (1893), and that by James Fitzmaurice-Kelly (1897), are valuable. A history in Spanish by Don Manuel de la Revilla and Don Pedro de Alcantara García, 2 vols., Madrid, 1872, may also be consulted. Dr Menéndez y Pelayo's *Historia de las Ideas estéticas en España* (Madrid) is much more than a full and acute history of criticism; vol. ii. part ii. (1884), and vol. iii. part i. (1886), throw much light on this period, with a wider grasp of the growth of its literary theory than I have come across elsewhere.

continued influence of the Inquisition during the forty-six years of Philip's reign,—all these conditions left the country farther in the rear of science, thought, culture, and form than perhaps any other reported in this sketch. It is startling to find a courageous and enlightened writer, Father Benito Jerónimo Feijóo,¹ a Benedictine monk, appearing, after many years of retirement, in 1726, and fighting amidst obloquy and surprise the battles that had begun thirty or fifty years before even in backward Germany. Feijóo (1676-1764) is found analysing Descartes, pleading for the consciousness of animals and for the innocence of knowledge, deriding witchcraft and astrology, introducing his country to a very wide span of science and culture, and using his conclusions in order to clear a rational basis for his orthodox faith. He was more intent on his thought than on his manner, but is acknowledged by all historians as the broadest and most efficient pioneer of culture amidst a sunken people. His labours are not unlike those earlier ones of Thomasius in Germany.

A like story has to be told in the stricter field of literature. The vices of style with which Spain had once, in the day of her power, helped to
Decay of verse. infect many other countries, and which those countries shook off with one accord, though at different seasons, under the classical impulse, persisted at home. Varied forms of conceit and preciosity and bombast defaced the verse of the eigh-

¹ Selections fill vol. 66 of Rivadeneyra, *Biblioteca*; they are largely from the *Teatro crítico* and the *Cartas eruditas*.

teenth century for many decades. One or two poets survived, like Gabriel Álvarez de Toledo or Gerardo Lobo,¹ of whom the best that is said is that in a better age they would have developed an authentic style, and that they show brighter than the crowd; for, as the chief native historian of the period puts it, "there was no lack of poets, but only of poetry." No pretence can be made of detailing these exceptions, nor could it here be worth while. It is more to our purpose to name one of the rarer devotional spirits of the time.

The Spanish author best known in Europe was Miguel de Molinos (1627 ?-1697), the chief missionary of Quietism, whose doctrine was spread over Catholic and other lands by his *Guída Spirituale* (1675). Probably first penned in Spanish, but first published in Italian at Venice and then at Rome, abridged in French, turned into a Latin *Manuductio* (1687) by the German pietist Francke, and into English² (1688 and 1699) as well as Dutch, this famous manual raised a new schism in the Old Faith. Molinos, at first victorious, had thousands of disciples; but he was conquered, and his following scattered, by the power of the various Orders and the Holy Office. The Jesuits obliquely assaulted him

¹ Full accounts and specimens in Rivadeneyra, vol. 61, where are also "Jorge de Pitillas'" satire, and the verses of Luzán (not his treatise).

² The 1699 English version of the *Guída* was republished, Glasgow, 1885. The full translated title ran: *The Spiritual Guide, which disentangles the soul and brings it by the inward way to the getting of perfect contemplation and the rich treasure of eternal peace.*

through their orator Segneri, and by bringing political pressure through the French king. In 1687 Molinos was condemned and forced to abjure. Saying, according to an English report,¹ that he was "slandered but penitent," he vanished into prison and there died. The similar propaganda of Mme. Guyon in France seems independent and is less worthy; the victory of Bossuet over the French Quietists was a decade later. Molinos cast into eloquent method the ideas of St Theresa and of many others, and made an appealing dialect of his own to describe the mystic's progress. His depreciation of all outward cult and ritual roused the Church, and his exaltation of the passive state of soul at the apparent cost of moral effort was a fatal rock of offence. His interest to our story lies in the clearness with which he threw down the challenge to reason on the eve of its triumph, and the power with which he realised the unconscious and receptive side of the human spirit, which was at that time ignored by almost every school of thought. His system is full of more refinements than can here be named. To reach the state of inward "re-collection" or peace, he says that the mere practice of meditation, where only the reason is at work, is hopelessly insufficient. The soul must leave this far behind; must plunge into a barren-seeming phase of "aridity"

¹ In the anonymous *Three Letters from Italy* (1688), issued as a supplement to Burnet's, and much fuller and better than Burnet's on this matter. For other references, see Schaff, *Religious Encyclopedia*, Edin., 1883, s.v. "Molinos," and Murdoch's tr. of Mosheim's *Church History* (1848), p. 775. There is an account also in the *Bibliothèque Janséniste*, which I have not seen.

or "darkness," when its prayer seems unheard, and its torture aimless, but when the diviner and unconscious part is working all the while towards the way of peace. The will, so far as it acts at all, only serves to keep the soul in this "wise passiveness," which is in the nature of a continual act of prayer. Thence emerging, the soul rises by more steps to a condition less and less determinate, not only without care for self, but without distinct personality or will, until at last the barriers are broken down in the beatitude of "pure disinterested love." This progress to and from the "Everlasting No" Molinos sets out with fire and depth in his own phrasing.¹ It was the negation of reason, as much as the menace to morals or to the externalities of the Church, that broke his advance. His book and the *Grace Abounding* of Bunyan, though their phrasing might be purely transitory, remain to us to prove that the mystical spirit in its higher deliverance could not be silenced even in the most untoward days.

The rest of our note must be given to the earlier attempts of French classicism to impose itself upon Spanish letters.

Philip V., a genuine creature of Versailles, made a well-intended effort to transport classicism² into

¹ This theory of *Molinosism* the reader will not confound with *Molinism*, or the doctrines of Luiz Molina, more than half a century earlier, concerning the relation of freewill and grace.

² For much more on Spanish Gallicism and criticism see Menéndez y Pelayo, *op. cit.*, vol. iii. chap. ii.; and for definitions of *culturismo*, &c., vol. ii. chap. x. p. 490. Cp. chap. ii. in the Marqués de Valmar's *Bosquejo*, cited above.

Spain. More properly, he removed some of the outward barriers which prevented Spain from following the general course of European culture and kept her in a singular ignorance of the French writers. In 1714 an Academy was set up, perhaps modester and safer in its programme than the original of Richelieu. It did not submit works of art to its *imprimatur*, but gave itself to the task of fixing the language and clearing it from depravations. But even here it worked somewhat blindly; for in the first issue of its Dictionary, completed by 1739, were found a mixture of quotations from good authors and bad alike. In 1729 an Academy of History, which was to do sound work, was modelled, and in 1751 fully organised. Single plays of Corneille and Molière were translated in the first quarter of the century; but the true renewal of culture and criticism begins in the second quarter, during the generation of Feyjóo and the writers who surrounded him. In 1737 appeared a short-lived quarterly review, the *Diario de los Literatos de España*, somewhat on the model of Bayle's or Leclerc's learned enterprises, and superior in knowledge and weight to anything that Spain had yet seen. One of its managers, Don José Gerardo de Hervás, who wrote under the name of Jorge Pitillas, produced in 1742 a short but memorable satire *Against the Bad Writers of this Century* (*Contra los malos Escritores de este Siglo*). It is in terza rima, and resembles the attacks of Rosa or Menzini, but is much more caustic and compressed. Packed with

Reviewing ;
Satire

avowed echoes from Juvenal, and with unavowed echoes from Boileau, it nevertheless rises to a pungent and personal note, and lashes the mass of execrable verse still cumbering the ground, and the vices of form that had elsewhere long been obsolete. Of all the works of the sort during this period, few are more to the purpose. Now for the first time the tables are fairly turned on Spain by France. The divergent faults of *culteranismo* and *conceptismo* both proceeded from a false idea of the relation that obtains between the matter and form of poetry. The former, illustrated in Góngora or Marino, consists in a luxury of gorgeous and vacant images that dress up the form in order to conceal the inner void; perhaps Erasmus Darwin is the nearest English example. The latter is the perversion of the intellectual element of prose into subtlety and fantasy, after the manner of our metaphysical writers. In the same year as the *Diario* appeared the chief treatise of Spanish classicism, long to hold authority in its own tongue, the *Poética* of Don Ignacio de Luzán.¹ Ever since the Renaissance Spain had been somewhat rich in scholastic creeds of art, decocting the *Poetics* and Horace, and intimately linked with the official Aristotelian philosophy. Even Lope de Vega had at times belied his freer genius and spoken in the
and Poetic:
Luzán.
 language of a "preceptista," or rule-and-line critic. The Spanish genius, like the English, had defied these rules in its drama. But now,

¹ Various eds., e.g., Madrid, 1789, 2 vols. (enlarged with Luzán's own additions).

when the inspiration that justified the defiance had gone, and only the lees remained, it was a service to codify the newer precept. Luzán has the show of method rather than unity of principle; but he was a travelled scholar, acquainted with German and English as well as French, and deriving more from the Italian criticism of Muratori and his companions than from Boileau and Le Bossu. The first two books, which are much the freest, deal with the nature, source, and function of poetry, the two latter with the rules of the epic and the drama. Luzán is often narrow and pedantic; but he revolts against many of the stricter canons, defends, like Gravina, the rights of inventive fancy, and distinguishes the plastic faculty from the kind of imitation that is mere copying. A new page of æsthetic is being turned by these writers of the second quarter of the century, and it belongs to the next volume. Feyjóo,¹ in his discussions on the rationale of good taste and on the "Je ne sais quoi," marks the discomfort of the classical criticism in presence of the reawakening sense of beauty, and of the indefinable personal elements that enter into the due judgment of it. At this point Spain begins to catch a less belated echo of the general thought. The ferment of these critical disputes was kept up by other contributors to the *Diario*, like Don Juan de Iriarte (1702-1771), the head of the royal library at Madrid, a strict and versatile scholar who did much academic

¹ Rivadeneyra, vol. 56, pp. 344-354. Menéndez y Pelayo, *op. cit.*, vol. iii. pp. 163-168.

service to the language. His son, Don Tomás de Iriarte, born 1750, was a leader in a later growth of classicism, and in his *Fábulas literarias* took up with notable skill the form of La Fontaine, but for the ends of purely literary satire; while the *Fábulas morales* of a contemporary, Don Félix de Samaniego, had no such limitation, and drew upon Gay as well as La Fontaine. These writers fall far ahead of our record, and belong to the brighter reign of Charles III. In Spain, as elsewhere during the eighteenth century, classicism, while rooted in the *grand siècle*, becomes complicated with Voltaire, with the *Encyclopédie* and the new mental movement, as well as with the attempted revival, in sundry phases, of the pure native tradition.¹

The Portuguese writing² of the period submitted to many of the same influences as the Spanish, and in the later seventeenth century little original effort is discovered. The age of noted chroniclers like Luiz de Sousa, of poets like Francisco

¹ This history is set forth in the full monograph of Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *Iriarte y su Época*, Madrid, 1897.

² Theophilo Braga, the chief literary historian, has published: *Manual da Historia da Litteratura Portuguesa*, Oporto, 1875; *Curso da Historia da Litteratura Portuguesa*, Lisbon, 1886 (a convenient survey); *Introdução e Theoria da Historia Portuguesa*, Oporto, 1896, more general and philosophical. Several vols. of the new edition of Braga's complete history of the literature (Oporto) are published or promised, such as *A Arcadia de Lisboa*. There are also: A. Loiseau, *Histoire de la Littérature portugaise*, Paris, 1886, and T. Ross's translation in 2 vols. of Bouterwek's *History of Portuguese Literature*. There is as yet no original history of this literature in English.

Manoel de Mello and Francisco Rodriguez Lobo, and of the last epic and dramatic writers, quickly faded down. The career of the great Jesuit preacher, pamphleteer, and diplomatist, Antonio Vieira, whose prose has been very highly praised, lasted till the close of the century. Most of the doubtful forms of rhetoric that beset the prose and verse of the Southern peoples are reported to have held their own in Portugal. But in default of first-hand knowledge of this literature, which at many points has more than a historical interest even in this its time of depression, it seems best to devote these few lines to the book that made a certain echo through literary Europe, though its Portuguese original is lost.

Braga calls the *Lettres portugaises traduites en français*,¹ which appeared at Paris in 1669, "the most authentic in feeling of all the psychological documents that the Portuguese spirit offers in the seventeenth century." These letters have sometimes been regarded askance, but unwisely. The evidence, both of style and circumstance, for their genuineness, though it stops short of scientific proof, must be taken to uphold the long tradition that ascribes them to the "Portuguese Nun," Marianna

¹ *The Letters of a Portuguese Nun*, translated by Edgar Prestage, London, 1893 and 1897, includes an excellent introduction and bibliography; and the 1893 ed. also has the original French (cp. E. Asse, *Lettres portugaises avec les réponses—i.e., the spurious answers—Paris, 1889*), as well as the seventeenth-century English couplets. The fullest statement of the facts, and a minute and cumulative plea for authenticity, are to be seen in *Soror Marianna*, by Luciano Cordeiro, 2nd ed., Lisbon, 1890.

Alcoforada, of Beja, in the province of Alemtejo. They are five in number, and are written to the Marquis de Chamilly, an officer serving under Schomberg, who was engaged in the reform of the Portuguese army just at this period. In 1667 Chamilly was recalled; the letters of the deceived nun followed him, but failed to plant their sting, and Chamilly did not prevent them being published in a French version. It often bears traces of Portuguese idiom. If the letters are false, the age of Boileau possessed an unknown forger with a genius like Richardson's. Nothing can be more unlike the rhetoric of the contemporary romance or the fabricated memoir of intrigue. The *Letters* are a flood, in broken elemental speech, of regrets that Marianna has met her fate, of confessions that she would not have missed it even to be saved what she suffers, and of assurance that she will live despite her wish to die. She lived to be old, and Chamilly to be otherwise distinguished. Sequels were concocted; Roger L'Estrange made a prose version, and an unknown hand another in English bastard heroics. The artificial air of many of these followings has unfairly served to reflect suspicion on the *Letters* themselves.

Classicism may be said to have set in definitely with the reign of John V. (1706-1750). As in Spain,
Classicism. an age of Academies began under royal auspices, and they did real service in their sphere. The language was slowly cleared: the Academy of History, founded in 1720, came to do excellent work and lay the masonry for historical studies. Much

philological and scientific advance was to be made in the course of the eighteenth century. The intellectual awakening, the revolt against the schools, and the importation of sound method, came late. Luiz Antonio Verney, in his remarkable and comprehensive *Verdadeiro Methodo de estudar*¹ (1747), struck at the educational system of the Jesuits, and something of the campaign of Port-Royal was repeated. The literary models were often French. A great Mæcenas, the Count of Ericeira, translated the poetic of Boileau, and other hands acclimatised Racine and Fénelon. The familiar kinds were more or less studiously practised, but it is not claimed that this schooling was very fruitful for Portuguese letters. The effort was divorced from the genius of the people; it depended much on crown patronage, and the crown was not in alliance with intellectual progress. Much later an Arcadia (1756) of the Italian kind was established, with the same machinery and fopperies, and with the same laudable desire to make head against the faults of taste and style that still persisted. It cannot be said that such efforts began to tell till after the middle of the century.

¹ See Braga, *Curso, &c.*, p. 338, and the whole section on "French Pseudo-classicism."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

THOUGHT: THE NEW METHODS APPLIED—MYSTICISM LOST OR ISOLATED
 —POETRY FAILING—FINAL RECOMPENSE—SCIENCE AND FEDERAL
 EFFORT IN LETTERS—SECONDARY KINDS; AND A COMMON POETIC.

AFTER so wide a survey, we have now a better right to turn and ask, Wherein does the unity of the Augustan period consist? What are the chief intellectual and formal traits common to the writing of Western Europe from 1660 onwards? *Rationalism* and *classicism*; most of the literature rallies under one of these forces, or else under the resistance that is made to them. The two are close akin, but may first be discriminated.

In all the countries, and earliest in France, England, and Holland, the modern mind entered on a new phase, whose precise record belongs to philosophy. The methods of Descartes and of science, which sometimes pulled different ways, but in the main together, gave singleness of attack and discipline to that critical movement, which had begun earlier in the scattered utterances

*Thought: the
 new methods
 applied.*

of Rabelais or Bruno. The new way of approaching authority can only be compared with the revolution in the theory of astronomy. And its calculus began to be applied—after a necessary and rather indecent interlude of ignoring the past—to the matter of politics, historical inquiry, and scholarship, as well as in pure speculation. Hence the “enlightenment” of the next century, as well as its increase of positive knowledge, is rooted in this period, when criticism, though still timid and departmental, began to muster its attack. And the note of reason and criticism is heard in pure literature as well,—in Molière, and Swift, and Holberg, as well as in the philosophers. The special connections of the Cartesian spirit with letters have been noticed in the first chapter.

Some of the spiritual, as distinct from the artistic, losses have also been remarked. The gravest is the suspension of the religious instinct in many of the leading minds. In Locke, in Bayle, religion is faced as a political or social phenomenon, and not as *also* a thing to interpret from within. The minds that hold to the sense of the infinite, or to the solitary side of devotion, are often estranged from the liberating power of thought and culture, which was busy with other work and was itself not yet wide enough to comprehend mysticism. Molinos and George Fox in various fashion decline to play the game with reason

Mysticism lost according to rules that all accept. *or isolated.* Mysticism thus suffered by isolation; it usually cared less than nothing for the aims and idiom of classicism, and it was often at odds, not so much

with the advanced-guard of philosophy, as with the official orthodoxy in the various folds. In the case of the more educated minds, one of the chief means of conciliation between the articles of the creed and the mystical spirit was found in the cult of Plato. For whether at Cambridge or the Oratory, Platonism often enabled a transaction between the Church and the newer thought, when the scholastic theory had fallen out of credit. It was not confined to theology, but touched poetry and literary criticism at scattered points, in Sweden, Italy, or England. Yet, in spite of finding spirits as congenial as Shaftesbury or Berkeley, it remained, as ever, the possession of a few, and in the eighteenth century these few became fewer.

Such a drying-up of the intimate sources of religious feeling was part of the failure of poetry at large. In

Poetry failing.

England, as we have said, there was more poetry to lose than anywhere else, unless possibly in Spain. But this loss, which has been described in outline in the second chapter, though it extended to every literature, was an incident of the critical process, and was well repaid in the long-run. Those who only care for the highest poetry itself will never understand what was done for poetry in the day of its decadence. How much of the romantic revival, of the romantic triumph, lay and still lies in the ideas of freedom, of asserting the personality, of defiance to the accepted, of proving all things! And did not these spring direct from the "enlightenment," and was not the enlightenment first beginning to speak, though

only in confused prophecy, during the seventeenth century? Hence it is a slight account of the affair to say that poetry was followed by prose, or a *Final recompense.* period of creation, after its decadence, by one of commentary. Such language implies a see-saw, and not a progress. Yet if anything is true of the rational period it is surely this, that the human mind, in thought, in art, in language, was everywhere facing certain sacrifices, which it wrongly at the time thought no sacrifice, but which were wanted for its final power and freedom.

A phrase on another page may be repeated, which contains the chief general idea of this book—namely, that “the saving process of human thought was forced for generations to beggar the sense of beauty.” Such a process is of course not regular, like the mowing of a field. For instance, the poetry of nature never quite fails, though the third chapter in England has described its weakening. The sense for nature in her deeper and more illuminating aspects might seem to fade as the knowledge of the natural mechanism increases. But it is there in La Fontaine: in unexpected minor Dutch and English versifiers it is there also. It is soon to revive; the revival is heard not only in Thomson, but in Haller and his school. When the revival comes, indeed, the poetry of nature is at first void of inwardness, and is not the stronger for its alliance with the watery sentiment of deism; but it is there, and it will grow.

There were other survivals besides mystical sentiment and the poetry of nature, but the chief con-

quests of the rational age may now be recalled, at least in their artistic bearing. The remarks on Cartesianism need not be repeated, but it is now clearer how the powerful march of physical science, besides its intrinsic importance, told upon prose and helped to shape it in most of the languages. The virtues of scientific writing spread to other kinds, and wrought with the instinct of conversation and social amenity, and with the love of argument and pleading and oratory, to form modern style. We have already shown how Latin gave way and how the vernaculars came to be the medium of thought. But the most notable thing that science contributed to letters was not a good plain style, or logical ordering, but the idea of *federal effort*. The social conditions, first in France and then elsewhere, helped this idea, which may be said to have been new to literature, of fraternal and international labour. It was not till now that the notion of "Europe, as for intellectual purposes one great confederation," could be said to glimmer before the modern mind. Apart from science, but not irrespective of it, we trace in letters a coincident, if not a concerted, attempt. It is the attempt to get a true relation between form and matter, and to throw over all ways of writing that imply a false one. The sentence passed on metaphysical verse, on Marinism and its imitators, on Gongorism, on the precious, on romances, on impossible kinds of drama and insufferable shapes of sentence, on impure or provincial diction,—these are all evidences of the campaign. Literature sustains *us* by its matter. but *itself*

*Science and
federal effort
in letters.*

it sustains by its form; and the seventeenth century began the effort to rectify both form and matter.

The age is often despised for its academies. They had, it is true, their dreary and fallacious side, and they were apt to make mediocrity too happy with the sense of company, but they did real service to language, and they were sometimes a refuge of sound sense. They were the casual and official expression of the great struggle of taste to be quit of the weeds that were smothering it. And if the higher forms of art are not born of this kind of joint-stock effort, being on the contrary nursed in solitude and individual protest, yet they do not in the end lose by the federal aim; for the instrument of language is cleared of rust and sharpened by long social scrutiny.

Thus we may say that classicism was marked by the emergence of a standard prose, very like ours—the prose, as it has been said of Dryden's, that we would all write if only we knew how. In poetry it was marked by the receding both of the higher inspiration and of the greater kinds of literature—epic and lyric, and tragedy in a less degree. The secondary kinds come: satire, argument, panegyric, obituary, epigram, fable. They prove their scope, they find their chance, they take up such poetical force as is available, and they become in their way perfect. Often they make us marvel and seem to belie their innate limitations. At their best, in Swift, in Molière, they are too frail for the weight of thought or wisdom that they have to carry. To such men, the formulation that we try to

*Secondary
kinds; and a
common poetic.*

frame, like that of their own day, can only partially apply. They go beyond classicism, and embody lasting moods of humanity in a form that is barely short of the greatest. They save the historian from the necessity of apologising for a second-rate period; and La Fontaine and Filicaja do so equally.

But the most curious and definite result of the literary change is the forming, in different tongues and at different times, of something like a common *poetic*. Boileau, Pope, Bodmer, Muratori, agree more or less in the main. The process of art, they think, consists in the imitation of nature—the nature of man as a social animal. Imitation is more or less precise transcription, the preciser the better. Its aim is the improvement of man, whom it represents. Its forms are mainly prescribed by canons which reason reveals, and which antiquity approves by matchless instances. (The protest against antiquity, in the name of the vanity of the *grand siècle*, is but a side-issue.) This critical programme accompanied the secondary forms that have been named. But, even as literature itself often rose free of such tapes and fetters, so criticism had to make its account with exceptions. Imitation is glossed in sundry ways to include inventive fancy; moral improvement is often obscured in the delightfulness of the form that serves to bait it, and in the whole “libertin” wing of writers it is not professed at all. While the reason is satisfied, the passions must be effectually transported. This kind of transaction with principle, in the case of Dryden or Gravina, means an escape from classicism, and a sign

that a deeper commentary is wanted. Above and beyond the strict tendency of the classical authors and theories, it is the age of Leibniz, of Bossuet—of the mighty recalcitrants or reconstructors. From either camp, it often makes us hear the accent of greatness, the accent of geniality and strength.

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